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HISTORY  
OF  
THE ROMANS  
UNDER THE EMPIRE.

BY  
CHARLES MERIVALE, B.D.,  
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FROM THE FOURTH LONDON EDITION. WITH A COPIOUS ANALYTICAL INDEX.

*TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.*

VOLS. V. AND VI.

NEW YORK:  
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,  
1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.  
1880.

KD 8251



*J. Marshall Hall*



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# HISTORY OF THE ROMANS

## *UNDER THE EMPIRE.*

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### CHAPTER XLII.

**TIBERIUS SUCCEEDS TO THE EMPIRE.—HIS CONDESCENSION TO THE SENATE, AND  
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14-17., A. U. 767-770.)**

**I**T may be recorded in praise of Augustus, among few other sovereigns who have long survived the date of their early popularity, that no burst of general satisfaction hailed the announcement of his decease. The old man had no doubt become stale and wearisome to his countrymen; a damp had been cast on their spirits by the dull shade of a monotonous rule, which had long ceased to be relieved by gleams of adventitious splendour. The prosperity of his latter years had been clouded by alarming disasters; yet these had not so depressed the feelings of the nation as the leaden weight of an administration which seemed concerned only

*The Romans  
ready to ac-  
quiesce in the  
succession of  
Tiberius.*

to avert motives of popular excitement. The generation which had admired Augustus as the genius of beneficent government had descended into the tomb: it had been succeeded by one which regarded him only as a despot, or, more unfavourably still, as a pedant. Whatever discontent, however, might lie smothered beneath the external forms of loyal submission, the approaching end of his long domination was anticipated in no quarter as the advent of a new era.<sup>1</sup> Augustus himself justly presumed that no party contemplated the restoration of the republic on his demise; he was content to warn his successor against the personal ambition of the most eminent nobles, those who might be expected to covet the sovereignty, and those who without coveting might be deemed fit to wield it.<sup>2</sup> But the great mass of the citizens acquiesced at this crisis in the conviction that the man who had shared his later counsels would be appointed heir to his relinquished powers. They contemplated without a murmur the succession of Tiberius to the complete cycle of the imperial functions, from no personal regard or admiration, nor from any deliberate belief that he was the fittest of the citizens to assume preëminence, but from a half-conscious acknowledgment of his divine or legitimate right as the adopted son of the hero Augustus, himself the adopted son of the divine Julius. Such is the proneness of the human mind to discover a right for an once established and uncontested might; so smooth is the path of usurpation, when it has once succeeded in scaling the barriers of the law. It was not in vain that Augustus had cherished among his subjects the remnant of religious feeling; he was rewarded by becoming himself the centre of their idolatry, and imparting a ray of his own adorable godhead to the heir of his name and titles.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 4.: "Postquam prevecta jam senectus agro et corpore fatigabatur, aderatque finis et spes novæ: pauci bona libertatis incassum disserere: plures bellum pavescere, alii cupere: pars multo maxima imminentes dominos varis rumoribus disserere."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 13.

But with the fortunes of Augustus, Tiberius did not inherit that reliance on his personal merits which nerved the arm of his predecessor, and imbued him with so lofty a sense of his mission. Though certainly Self-distrust of Tiberius. with no mean ability, both military and administrative, he seems to have been wanting in the higher quality of genius which seizes or makes its opportunities, and floats on the crest of the swelling waves of a national inspiration. Of this he was himself painfully sensible; and it was the consciousness that he could neither kindle the imagination of the soldiers like Julius, nor of the citizens like Augustus, that made him feel less secure of their obedience than he really was. He had suffered, indeed, though mainly through his own perverseness, a fall from power, which rendered him keenly alive to the precariousness of his elevation, and to the dangers which attend on infirmities of temper in the great. The secret of his predecessor's success had lain, as he was perhaps aware, in the perfect equilibrium of his abilities and his temper, in the combination of genius with self-command; his own conscious deficiency in this particular chilled him as an omen of ultimate failure, as it had already been the cause of his temporary disgrace. Tiberius reigned in the constant apprehension of the crash which he expected to overwhelm him; the sword of Damocles seemed ever suspended over him; and he scanned with angry perturbation the countenances of all who approached him, to discover whether they too saw the fatal spectre which was never absent from his own imagination.<sup>1</sup>

At the critical moment he might himself have hesitated, and looked timidly around him; but he was fortunate, if one may say so, in having in his mother Livia an ally endued with the unity of object and promptness in action which so strongly characterize her sex. Augustus, it seems probable, had not yet breathed his

Death of Augustus announced.

<sup>1</sup> One passing stroke from Pliny on this subject rivals in effect the elaborate paintings of Tacitus: "Tiberius tristissimus, ut constat, heminum." *Hist. Nat.* xxviii. 5

last, and his step-son, hastily recalled from the Dalmatian coast, was not yet in attendance on his death-bed, when the empress boldly ventured to take the necessary measures to prevent the tidings of his decease being too soon made public. When, however, Tiberius was himself on the spot, there was no further occasion for disguise, and the demise of the late emperor was proclaimed at the same moment with the substitution of a successor.<sup>1</sup> The fidelity of the few troops about the capital, already bound by the military sacrament to their actual chief's coadjutor, was sufficiently assured; obedience to the orders of Tiberius had become habitual to them. Nor was there any real cause for apprehension lest a rival should start up among the nobility of the capital. Of the possible competitors already designated by Augustus, Lepidus, he had said, was equal to empire, but would disdain it; Asinius Gallus might be ambitious of it, but was unequal to the post; and one only, the rich and high-born Arruntius, had the spirit both to desire, and, if occasion served, to contend for it.<sup>2</sup> But Arruntius bore no official distinction or military reputation; no circumstances had combined to smooth his way to such an elevation, and the only immediate risk of competition lay in the members of the Cæsarean family itself. Of these, Germanicus was at the moment absent: Drusus, the youthful child of Tiberius, had yet acquired no independent position; but the wretched Agrippa still lingered in his island-prison, and the rumour

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 5.: "Provisis quæ tempus monebat, simul excessisse Augustum et rerum potiri Neronem, fama eadem tulit."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 13.: "M. Lepidum dixerat capacem, sed aspernantem; Gallum Asinium avidum, et minorem; L. Arruntium non indignum, et si casus daretur ausurum." M. Æmilius Lepidus was brother of the Paulus Æmilius, husband of the younger Julia, who conspired against Augustus. See chap. xxxviii. He continued in the enjoyment of favour and dignity till his death, A. U. 786. Tac. *Ann.* vi. 27.; see below. C. Asinius Gallus was son of Asinius Pollio, and married to Vipsania, the divorced wife of Tiberius. For his death, 783, see below. L. Arruntius was son of a lieutenant of Augustus in the battle of Actium (consul A. U. 732). His suicide, A. U. 790, will be mentioned in its place.

that Augustus had recently visited him in secret, and held out, not without tokens of affection, some hopes of release and favour, had excited the jealous fears both of Livia and her son. As soon as Augustus ceased to breathe, and even before his decease was proclaimed, an order was conveyed to the centurion in guard over the captive to put him to death. Such was the belief of the times; but whether the order was issued by Livia, without her son's privity, or whether it was the first act of the new Cæsar's authority, the propagators of the rumour were not agreed. A hint seems indeed to have been thrown out that Augustus had instructed the keepers to kill their prisoner as soon as his own death should be known, to anticipate the risk of disturbance in the succession; and Tiberius publicly declared that the deed was not commanded by him; nevertheless he took no steps to explain the mystery, and the perpetrators of a crime thus officially acknowledged were allowed to remain unquestioned.<sup>1</sup>

Rumoured as-  
sassination of  
Agrippa Postu-  
mus.

With the announcement of the emperor's demise Tiberius summoned the senate by virtue of his tribunitian power.<sup>2</sup> The consuls Appuleius and Pompeius came forward, as the first magistrates of the republic, to swear obedience to him as their emperor, and the formula was repeated by all the officers of the state, and echoed by the soldiers and the citizens.<sup>3</sup> The ceremony

Tiberius con-  
venes the sen-  
ate.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus ascribes the act without hesitation to Tiberius: "Primum facinus novi principatus fuit Postumi Agrippæ cædes" . . . and Dion follows him. Sæcunius speaks more dubiously: "Quos codicillos dubium fuit Augustusne moriens reliquisset quo materiam tumultus post se subduceret, an nomine Augusti Livia, et ea consilio Tiberio an ignaro dictasset." Velleius seems to insinuate that Agrippa died before Augustus. In the will of the emperor, made sixteen months before his own decease, he made no mention of this grandson; but nothing can be built on this omission. Tacitus and Suetonius both agree that the centurion reported to Tiberius, "Factum esse quod imperasset," and that Tiberius replied with anger, "Neque imperasse se, et rationem facti reddendam apud senatum;" but took no further notice of the affair. See Tac. *Ann.* i. 6.; Suet. *Tib.* 22.; Dion, *lvii.* 3.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 23.: "Jure tribunitiæ potestatis coacto senatu."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 7.: "Primi Coss. in verba Tiberii Cæsaris juravere." In the

passed smoothly without demur or scruple. Tiberius alone, perhaps, was astonished at the readiness with which his fellow-citizens accepted from the lips of their magistrates the obligation to maintain the imperial system in his person. The terms in which he had convoked the fathers had been studiously moderate and cautious. He had carefully avoided committing himself to any personal views: he had only requested that they should consult about the honours due to the deceased; while for himself he proposed to continue meanwhile in attendance on the venerated remains, the sole public function which he claimed the right to discharge. Yet he had not scrupled to assume the ordinary ensigns of power at the emperor's death-bed, he had disposed the sentinels and given the watchword without reserve; even in presenting himself in the forum and the senate he had adopted a military escort; still more, he had dispatched his own orders to the legions in the provinces; in short, he had shown no signs of hesitation in anything but his address to the senators themselves.<sup>1</sup> As associated indeed in the imperium he was perfectly competent to take these military measures; but the motive which impelled him to act so promptly was his fear of Germanicus, the commander of several legions and the favourite of the people, who, it might be apprehended, would rather choose to seize the supreme power at once than wait for its descent to him hereafter.<sup>2</sup>

camp from which the usage was derived the *legatus Imperatoris* first uttered the oath of obedience—"præstitit sacramentum"—to his general; then the centurions, and finally, the soldiers—"jurabant in verba legati"—took his oath upon themselves. But the military sacrament had now become a general oath of allegiance, which the consuls proposed, and the rest of the citizens repeated after them. *Comp. Suet. Jul. 84.; Appian, Bell. Civ. ii. 145.*

<sup>1</sup> *Tac. Ann. l. c.*: "Defuncto Augusto signum prætoris cohortibus ut imperator dederat; excubiæ, arma, cætera aulæ; miles in Forum miles in Curiam comitabatur; literas ad exercitus, tanquam adepto principatu, misit; nusquam cunctabundus nisi quum in Senatu loqueretur." *Comp. Suet. Tib. 24.; Dion, vii. 2.*

<sup>2</sup> *Tac. l. c.*: "Causa præcipua ex formidine ne Germanicus, in ejus manu tot legiones, immensa sociorum auxilia, mirus apud populum favor, habere imperium quam expectare mallet."

Tiberius had a further reason for courting the suffrages of the senate, rather than commanding them: he was anxious to appear to owe his election to the national voice, rather than slip into the succession as the adopted heir of a woman-ruled dotard. It suited his temper, moreover,—and in estimating the acts of the moody Tiberius we must regard his temper even more than his policy,—thus to ascertain the real sentiments of the courtiers, whose voices he could have easily constrained.

Already, sixteen months before his death, Augustus had sealed his will, and placed it beyond his own reach in the custody of the Vestals.<sup>1</sup> By this instrument he had made a careful disposition of his property, after the manner of a private citizen. The bulk of it he had bequeathed, after expressing his regret at the loss of Cains and Lucius, to Tiberius and Livia in unequal proportions, the former receiving two thirds, the latter one third only; but even this share was beyond what the law allowed to a widow, and required a special exemption from the senate.<sup>2</sup> It was provided at the same time that Livia should be adopted into the Julian family, and distinguished with the title of Augusta. In default of the survival of these his first-named heirs, he called his grandsons and their children to the inheritance, one third of which was to descend to Drusus, the son of Tiberius, the remainder to be apportioned among Germanicus and his three male children. The unfortunate Julias were specially excepted from all benefit in this arrangement, and a clause was added by which their remains were forbidden to rest in the Cæsarean mausoleum. Of Agrippa Postumus no mention seems to have been made. Failing all natural or adoptive successors, the emperor had taken the precaution of inserting some names of

Private testament of Augustus.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Oct.* 101.; Tac. *Ann.* i. 8.; Dion, lvi. 32, 33.

<sup>2</sup> The *lex Voconia* had allowed a widow to inherit only a fourth, and this had been reduced to a fifth by the *lex Papia Poppæa*. It may be said, however, that Livia had been released from the severity of this law by receiving the *Jus trium liberorum*. Dion, lv. 2. See Reimar's note on Dion, lvi. 32.



the chief nobility, even such as he was known to have regarded during his lifetime with distrust and dislike, either to conciliate their favour towards his descendants, or as an empty display of generosity. But the property which, after fifty years of power, the emperor had to bestow, did not exceed what might be expected from a citizen of the first rank; and it was burdened by liberal donations to the public treasury, to the citizens individually, to the legionaries and the guards of the palace, and also to a few private friends.<sup>1</sup>

Last public  
counsels.

As regarded public affairs, the last counsels he gave his children and the commonwealth were exhortations to prudence and moderation. He requested that no ostentation of magnificence should induce them to emancipate many slaves at his funeral; that they should abstain from admitting the subjects of the empire indiscriminately to the honours and privileges of the ruling race; that they should summon all men capable of affairs to a share in their administration, and not accumulate all public functions in a single hand; lastly, that they should rest satisfied with the actual extent of the frontiers, nor risk, by the lust of further conquests, the loss of the provinces they possessed: for so he had paused himself in the career of his own successes, and preferred to present gain or personal glory the permanent interests of the republic.<sup>2</sup>

Tiberius was anxious that the citizens should notice the deference paid by the deceased ruler to their presumed supremacy, and fancy that the empire, with its various pow-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Populo et plebi cccxxxv., prætoriarum cohortium militibus singula nummum millia, legionariis ccc., cohortibus civium Rom. cccca. nummos viritum dedit."

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lvi. 33. These counsels seem to have been appended to the register of the empire (its forces, revenues, &c.), which Augustus bequeathed to the state. Tac. *Ann.* l. 11.: "Proferri libellum recitarique jussit: opes publicæ continebantur, &c. . . . addideratque consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii." See chap. xxxix. It was still a question, however, whether this last advice was the result of care for the public weal, or of envy towards his successor.

ers and prerogatives, was still their own to give or to withhold. The senate and people vied in the honours they heaped on the memory of so loyal a sovereign. The body, it was decreed, should be borne into the field of Mars through the gate of triumph, but Tiberius himself interfered to moderate the officious zeal of individual courtiers. The populace signified their resolve to consume the remains in the forum, and an armed guard was required to prevent this irregularity, to avert the riots which might have ensued, and spare the superstitious feelings which would be hurt by it. But the vapid admiration of the sated sight-seers of Rome was finally contented with the decorous solemnities of a national apotheosis. The senate, the same body, at least in name, which had struck down another Cæsar sixty years before, which had conceded honours to his corpse under bitter compulsion, and driven his adorers from his shrine with blows and menaces, now combined with all classes of the citizens in a common act of extravagant adulation. The procession of the knights who attended on the bier held its march from the suburban station of Bovillæ to the centre of the city; orations in praise of the deceased were pronounced by Tiberius and his son Drusus from the steps of the Julian temple and from the rostra; from the forum the honoured remains were borne upon the shoulders of the senators to the place of cremation in the Campus Martius. Temples, priests, and holy observances were decreed to the divine Augustus, as before to the divine Julius, for a prætor was found to affirm that he had seen his soul ascend from his ashes into the celestial abodes. This testimony, such as it was, followed an ancient and auspicious precedent, and was rewarded with a splendid present from Livia.<sup>1</sup> On the death of Cæsar no such vision had been required: Rome and the world believed without a witness, that a spirit more than human had exchanged life for immortality.

Funeral honours decreed him.

Meanwhile a scene was being enacted in the Senate

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Oct.* 100.; Dion, lvi. 46.

House of much more importance to the interests of the citizens than that which concerned the remains of fallen greatness just consigned to the tomb. Tiberius had learnt from the policy of his sire that, however bold and decided his movements might be in the camp and the provinces, he must govern the nobles in the city by craft and management. Following implicitly the example which had been set him on more than one solemn occasion, he now met the professions of submission to his authority, which the senators eagerly tendered, with pretending to shrink from its acceptance. He began with uttering ambiguous generalities about the vast extent of the empire, and the arduousness of the task of governing it.<sup>1</sup> From thence he proceeded to insinuate that the charge was in fact too great for a single hand, and might tax the powers of more than one associate. He hinted, perhaps, at the policy of appointing a third triumvirate, to divide the cares to which Augustus had alone been equal; as it had required the vigour of three combined imperators to wield the sword of Cæsar. He was not unaware that among the traditions of the republic the triumvirate was more obnoxious than even the monarchy, and he might anticipate that the fear of returning to a rule stamped with the fatal impress of massacre and civil war, would throw his hearers on the only other feasible alternative, the perpetuation of imperial supremacy. The senators received his harangue in silence, rather from uncertainty as to his real wishes than from any hesitation of their own; for, with the exception of the few among them who might cherish schemes of personal aggrandizement, there can be no doubt that the general sentiment was to acquiesce, however reluctantly, in the substitution of Tiberius for Augustus. But the smooth progress of the trick was presently interrupted by the captious question of Asinius, who ventured to ask the speaker what part of the imperial functions he was prepared himself

Vell. ii. 124.: "Veluti luctatio civitatis fuit pugnantis cum Cæsare senatus populiq[ue], ut stationi paternæ succederet; illius ut potius æqualem civem quam eminentem liceret agere principem."

to accept. Tiberius was for a moment embarrassed; but recovering himself, he replied adroitly that it was not for him to choose or to reject any particular charge, when for his own part he would willingly be excused from all. The rash or petulant inquirer sought to cover his retreat by declaring he had no other motive in asking, but to show by the answer he should elicit that the state was one and indivisible, and could only be governed by a single head. The session ended with the understanding of all parties that the government should continue in the hands of Tiberius, with all the functions amassed by his predecessor.<sup>1</sup> No formal decree, however, was pronounced to this effect; he already possessed the imperium, which required no further instrument to give him the control of the legions and provinces; the tribunitian and proconsular power had been granted on a previous occasion, and the prerogatives of the consular were sufficiently understood without a distinct and formal recognition. The principate was, perhaps, virtually conferred without a special act, by tacitly yielding the first voice in the senate, while the popular suffrage, in which lay the disposal of the chief pontificate, might be easily taken for granted. The time had come when, whatever artifices might still be required for the management of the senate, the chief of the state need keep terms no longer with the popular assemblies. The appointment of the consuls, with the forms of voting, was now finally withdrawn from the centuries, and therewith the last frail remnant of the political privileges of the Roman people was substantially abolished. The emperor henceforth nominated

All the functions of empire left by tacit understanding in the hands of Tiberius.

The last political privileges of the people abolished.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 11-13.; Suet. *Tib.* 24.; Comp. Dion, lvii. 2. That there was no regular decree on this occasion, as was usual in later times, for conferring the imperial prerogatives, appears from the fact that Tacitus and Suetonius are not agreed as to the turn the discussion ultimately took: the former gives us to understand that Tiberius broke up the meeting without any specific declaration of assuming the empire; but Suetonius says, expressly, that he agreed to undertake the charge, at least for a season.

four candidates, and allowed the senate simply to make choice of two among them: but the aspirants for honour were no longer subjected to the humiliation of suing, or the pain of being refused, and the express recommendation of the emperor himself was considered as in fact authoritative. The senators accepted with gratitude the relief from a delicate and invidious responsibility, and the people submitted to the change with scarce an audible murmur.<sup>1</sup>

While the supreme power was thus quietly changing hands at the centre of the empire, events of no little mo-

Discontent of  
the legions in  
Pannonia.

ment were happening on the frontiers, where the seeds of future revolutions were sown by a mutinous soldiery. The insubordination which Cæsar had experienced more than once among his own legionaries, was the effect of his indiscriminate enlistments, and the licentious principles he had instilled into his followers. The three legions which now occupied Pannonia under Junius Blæsus were composed in a great measure of recruits promiscuously levied to repress the recent revolt. Though among these many veterans were mingled, it seems impossible that the complaints they put forth of having served thirty or even forty years without obtaining their discharge, could have been true of any large number. Harassed as the actual veterans may have been by a service protracted, under the necessities of the times, far beyond the legitimate period, we may conjecture that the turbulence of the recent levies had given an impulse to their dissatisfaction. They complained of their wounds and privations; of the intolerable harshness of camp discipline; of the meagreness of their daily dole; of the miserable and distant recompense of allotments on a barbarous frontier. The few days of rest or rejoicing which the legate allowed them, on the confirma-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 15.: "Tum primum a campo comitia ad Patres translata sunt," etc.; but at the close of this book (c. 81.) the same author remarks, in apparent contradiction to this statement, "De comitiis consularibus, quæ tum primum illo principe ac deinceps fuere, vix quidquam firmare ausim," etc. The subject will be treated more fully in a subsequent chapter.

tion of the empire to Tiberius, were occupied by the most ardent spirits in fanning the sparks of sedition; yet it must be observed, that among all their murmurs they never pretended that the death of Augustus released them from their legitimate subjection to his associate.<sup>1</sup>

The authority of Blæsus was soon overthrown. The troops insisted that the term of their service should be definitely fixed at sixteen years.<sup>2</sup> They demanded also a further advance in the rate of the legionary's pay, which Julius Cæsar had already raised to double the earlier standard of the republic.<sup>3</sup> The legatus was compelled to send his son to Rome as the bearer of these requisitions, which wore the character of a defiance, for the Roman in the camp lost every right of the freeman; his only patron was the tribune in the Forum, his sole means of redress his vote in the Comitia. Nor while awaiting a reply from the emperor and senate, did the soldiers return frankly to obedience. Conscious of the crime of indiscipline, they broke into frenzies of anger and jealousy, struck or slew their centurions, and insulted their commanders. Drusus, being dispatched promptly with some prætorian cohorts to recover their fidelity, found them in open mutiny, occupying their camp and drawing their rations, but refusing every work and exercise. The prince was furnished with no defi-

Drusus is sent  
to quell the  
mutiny.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Hitherto the term of service for the legionary was twenty years, and sixteen for the prætorian, the name by which the guards of the emperor's person, and tent or palace, came now to be distinguished. But even at the end of that period Augustus had introduced the custom of exauctoratio, by which the legionaries were relieved from some of the more severe duties of the service, but still retained under their colours, instead of missio or complete discharge.

<sup>3</sup> The soldiers demanded the denarius per day instead of the ten ases. The denarius had been raised to the value of sixteen, or, as some say, twelve ases, and such was apparently the increased demand. But if I understand Pliny rightly, this point they never actually gained: the denarius continuing always to be counted as ten ases in military payments. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 3.: "Denarium in militari stipendio semper pro x assibus datum." But the whole question is involved in great difficulty. See Lipsius, *Excurs.* vi. and vii. in Tac. and the notes of Walther, Ritter, and other commentators.

nite instructions; his father had withheld from him the requisite authority for conceding demands which he still hoped to evade. The soldiers were infuriated at this disappointment. Drusus was actually attacked by tumultuary bands and with difficulty rescued; night intervened, but the morning seemed about to dawn on the entire defection of three legions. Suddenly the moon became eclipsed, and before it emerged from the ominous shadow, clouds had gathered in the sky, and seemed, to the affrighted and ignorant multitude, to threaten its total extinction. The men were struck with dismay; and while the fit of fear or remorse was upon them, Drusus seized the moment for promises and caresses. In return for some vague assurances of redress from the emperor, he engaged them to surrender their ring-leaders, on whom he inflicted the full vengeance of outraged discipline, with the consent and approbation of the fickle multitude.<sup>1</sup>

Almost at the same moment, and from similar motives of discontent, a mutiny had broken out also among the legions on the Rhine. The danger was far greater in this case than in the other; the army of the Rhenish frontier numbered not less than eight legions, posted in two divisions in the Upper and Lower Germania; and the direction of the entire force was intrusted to Germanicus, as commanding in chief throughout the whole province of Gaul. Not only did the mutineers clamour for higher pay and more indulgent treatment; but the legions of the lower province proclaimed that they would carry the youthful Cæsar in triumph to Rome, and gird him with the sword of their deceased leader. They obtained complete mastery over their officers, and the legate Aulus Cæcina; and their outbreak was scarcely kept in check by the yet undecided attitude of the upper division, which C. Silius still restrained from open mutiny. Germani-

Insubordination among the legions on the Rhine.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 16-30.: "Promptum ad asperiora ingenium Druso erat: vocatos Vibulenum et Percennium interfici jubet." But could any commander have done otherwise?

cus was absent at Lugdunum, where he was presiding over the census of the Gaulish states. Here he received the news of the late emperor's death, with orders from Tiberius to tender to the provincials the oath of allegiance to the elect of the senate. This duty he was intent on discharging, without apprehension of any military outbreak, when the report of the state of affairs in his camp interrupted his proceedings. The soldiers had assailed their officers with violence; they had murdered tribunes and centurions; obedience was at an end, and the legate himself was constrained to deliver into their hands the objects of their bitterest hatred.<sup>1</sup>

The Roman quarters among the Ubii had been for some days in a state of confusion and anarchy, when Germanicus arrived and threw himself boldly into the midst.

The young Cæsar was personally adored by the soldiers; nor, had it been otherwise, were any of them prepared to discard the authority of a scion

*Germanicus  
hastens from  
Lugdunum to  
suppress it.*

of the imperial house. On his appearance among them they cast themselves at his feet, imploring his sympathy with their just complaints, the most aged of the veterans seizing his hands, it was said, and thrusting them, as if to kiss them, *within their lips*, that he might feel their toothless gums, and learn to appreciate the length of their ill-requested services. Some showed him the scars of their wounds, others the marks of the centurion's vine-rod. The men soon lashed themselves into fresh fury, and with loud cries adjured Germanicus to lead them straight to Rome, and assume the empire under their protection. The young Cæsar shrank with horror from such a treason, and possibly they might in their frenzy have done violence to his person had not his attendants snatched him hastily from their grasp. But meanwhile their emissaries were soliciting the adhesion of the legions of the Upper Germania, stationed at Moguntiacum; and while undecided as to their ultimate objects, they already talked of commencing their rebellion by the plunder of the

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 31, 32.; Suet. *Tib.* 25.; Dion, *lvii.* 5.



Ubii and the cities of Gaul. The military chiefs were well aware that this dissolution of discipline on the frontier would bring the Germans immediately across it, and the civil war which must ensue between the faithful allies of Rome and her own insurgent children would be aggravated by foreign invasion, and possibly by provincial revolt. Assembled in the emperor's tent, they hastily concerted an offer of terms to the soldiers, to which they pledged the name of Tiberius himself. Besides the required revision of the term of service, ample donatives in money were promised, as soon as the legions should return to winter quarters. This was not enough. The insurgents demanded that the stipulated sum should be paid down on the instant, and the private coffers of Germanicus and his officers, as well as of the emperor himself, were ransacked to satisfy them.<sup>1</sup>

This sacrifice was after all unavailing. The appearance of envoys from the senate, charged to examine the soldiers'

The popularity of Germanicus, and his success in quelling the mutiny.

demands, was the signal for a fresh disturbance; for the alarm quickly spread that the concessions made on the spur of momentary danger would fail to be ratified on maturer deliberation. The more violent of the mutineers persuaded their comrades to refuse all accommodation, and so formidable was the attitude now assumed, that Germanicus was forced to surrender the eagles to the keeping of the rebellious legionaries, and in fact to relinquish the command. At most he could only secure a retreat for the envoys, on whom the fury of the insurgents was about to fall, and at the same time for his wife and children, whom he was anxious to remove to a place of safety. Agrippina, a woman of masculine spirit and devoted to her husband, could hardly be persuaded to quit his side. When she at last took leave, with a few female attendants, carrying in her arms her infant child Caius, the pet and playfellow of the soldiers, the feelings of the spectators were moved to remorse. Germanicus seized the moment to remind them of the claims of his own family upon them, and of the

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 84-86.

love they had borne to his father Drusus; nor did he fail to recall to remembrance the glories of Augustus, the victories of Tiberius, and the spirit with which the immortal Julius had quelled the mutiny of his soldiers by addressing them as *citizens*. This last passionate appeal proved successful. The insurgents fell on their knees, and implored him to punish the guilty, to spare the penitent, and lead the pardoned host directly against the enemy. They conjured him to recall his wife and child, and not leave them as hostages in the land of the Gauls, but retain them under the safeguard of the Roman legions. Nor did they fail to deliver of their own accord to the punishment of the axe and rod those whom they regarded as their ringleaders, whom their officers gladly left it to themselves to point out. The ferocious zeal with which each offender denounced such as he chose to think more guilty than himself presents a fearful picture of human passion.<sup>1</sup>

When we meet among the scions of the imperial house with one described as eminently virtuous and noble, we must prepare to hear that his career was melancholy, that his promise ended in disappointment, and his death was premature. Such a death at least *doubly* gilds his virtues, while it may anticipate the development of crimes or vices. Of all the chiefs of Roman history, none has been represented in fairer colours than the ill-fated Germanicus. We have seen already that he was the nephew of Tiberius, being the son of the gallant Drusus, whose title he was permitted to inherit, by a daughter of the triumvir Antonius.<sup>2</sup> Augustus had connected him still more closely with himself, by uniting him to the child of Agrippa by his own daughter Julia. Adopted by Tiberius, he was placed on the same line of succession as his cousin Drusus, to whom he was two or three years senior; and after the deaths of Caius and Lucius Cæsar, who had shone so briefly as twin stars in the firmament, the fortunes of the two

Character of  
Germanicus.

Tac. *Ann.* i. 37-44.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 1.; *Calig.* 1.; Plut. *Anton.* 87.

adopted brothers seemed to rise together in auspicious conjunction.<sup>1</sup> Whatever brilliant future might be in store for Germanicus, the Romans, if we may believe their posthumous testimony to his merits, were fully persuaded that he deserved it. His natural abilities had been carefully cultivated. He had been trained equally in the art of war and the exercise of civil employment. His first laurels had been gained in his twenty-second year, in the wars of Pannonia and Dalmatia, the successful issue of which was in a great measure ascribed to his energy and conduct.<sup>2</sup> In the year 765 he had been summoned to the consulship, and in the highest rank of magistracy, young as he was, his countrymen had marked in him all the skill in affairs which is commonly attained only by experience. The government of the Gaulish provinces, too extensive a command to be entitled a mere proconsulate, followed on the expiration of his functions in the city; and there, at the head of eight legions, before the most formidable opponents of the Roman power, he stood in the eyes of the soldiers and provincials as little less than an emperor himself. The large training of the highest Roman education had fitted him, amidst these public avocations, to take a graceful interest in literature. His compositions in Greek and Latin verse were varied, and perhaps more than respectable for school exercises, with which only they should be compared.<sup>3</sup> Nor did he neglect

<sup>1</sup> Germanicus, born in September 739 (see above, ch. xxxviii.), was now, at the close of 767, in his twenty-ninth year. The date of the birth of Drusus is not accurately known; it was probably a short time before the separation of Tiberius from his mother Vipsania, in 742.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lvi. 15. See above.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek comedy of Germanicus (Suet. *Calig.* 3.) was probably a mere scholastic imitation, such as was generally the character of the Greek verses of the young Roman nobles. The translation of Aratus which is, I think properly, ascribed to him, was a *tour de force*, to which we can hardly attach any practical use, though even Cicero occupied himself in a similar version of the poet of astronomy. But Ovid solicits his patronage for the most learned of his own works, at a time when such applications were not merely compliments. *Fast.* l. init. Comp. *Ex. Pont.* iv. 8. 67.

the practice of oratory, which he employed, as was always specially recorded of those whose memory the Romans delighted to honour, in the defence rather than the prosecution of the accused.<sup>1</sup> His manners were eminently *civil* both at home and abroad, such as became the son of the man who, according to the fond belief of the citizens, would have restored the commonwealth; and while he comported himself towards his countrymen as an equal, his demeanour to foreigners and allies was affable and condescending. In the camp his behaviour was in striking contrast both with the reserve of Augustus and the mal-address of Tiberius. He lived freely among his soldiers, whose humours he sought to flatter, like the first and greatest of the Cæsars, by sympathy and kindness. When he explored his men's sentiments on the eve of a perilous undertaking, by traversing their quarters disguised at night, he might hear his own merits made the theme of their conversation, and assure himself of the confidence they reposed in his valour and fortune.<sup>2</sup> His popularity with all classes, especially with the soldiers, was fully shared by his consort. The greatest praise they could bestow on a woman was to liken her to the Roman matrons of a hallowed antiquity, and to bless her for her love to her husband, and the fertility which they hailed as its surest token.<sup>3</sup>

The strong contrast which the character of Germanicus thus presented to that of his uncle might have given cause for jealousy and distrust even in a private family: Jealousy of Tiberius.  
between members of a ruling dynasty, the course

<sup>1</sup> Suet. l. c.; Dion, lvi. 26.; Ovid, *Fast.* l. 21.:

“Quæ sit enim culti facundia sensimus oris,  
Civica pro trepidis cum tulit arma reis.”

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 13. The occasion will be specified below.

<sup>3</sup> Agrippina bore her husband nine children, of whom three died in infancy, the others, three sons and as many daughters, survived their father, and will all find a place in these pages. Suet. *Calig.* 7. With regard to one who died in childhood, a pleasing trait is recorded of Augustus: “Insigni festivitate, ejus effigiem habitu Cupidinis in æde Capitolinæ Veneris Livia dedicavit, Augustus in cubiculo ruo positam, quotiescunque introiret, exosculabatur.”

and succession of which were established on known and long-respected principles, it would have led no doubt to estrangement and mutual dislike; but the misfortune of Tiberius and his nephew lay in the vagueness of the title by which the one enjoyed power, and the other might be expected to aspire to it. The claim of Julius Cæsar to reign over the Romans was emphatically that of the worthiest. He founded his usurpation on the virtual presumption that the republic required a chief, and he was himself the fittest to become such. It was the aim of Augustus, of which he never lost sight for a moment, to strengthen his human right as the heir of Julius by the divine right, to which he also pretended, of moral fitness. This human right, if I may so call it, of inheritance might be strengthened in the third descent; but Tiberius, painfully alive to his own deficiencies, and conscious of no personal claim to the reverence of his countrymen, felt that the divine right no longer pertained to him, and was constantly harassed by the apprehension that the Romans, still looking for the worthiest to reign over them, would turn from him to the younger scion of the worthiest of Roman houses. Every despot is discontented at being outshone by the rising glories of his presumptive successor; but few have the excuse of the unfortunate Tiberius, who felt that every laurel placed on the brow of Germanicus constituted a claim, not to succeed him on the throne, but to eject him from it. Other usurpers have stepped at once within the circle of admitted principles of descent. The subjects of a Napoleon or a Cromwell were familiar with the idea of dynastic sovereignty; but it was otherwise with the children of the old Roman republic. The Cæsars had every rule and principle of monarchy to create; and it was not till they had established the rights of legitimacy, that the emperors could feel the personal security, which was the best guarantee for their temperate exercise of power. The mutiny of the German legions revealed to Tiberius a secret of fatal significance. The cries of the legionaries *Cæsar Germanicus*

*will not endure to be a subject*, confirmed the presentiment of his own self-disparaging conscience.<sup>1</sup>

After all, this distrust of his own abilities, which were certainly considerable, was the great and fatal defect in the character of the self-tormentor. The state of pupillage in which he had been held by Augustus may account perhaps for this self-disparagement, and for the meanness with which he ultimately threw himself on the support of a favourite far less able than himself. The trifling results of his own last campaign in Germany made him the more jealous of the plans now urged by Germanicus for the entire subjugation of the insolent victors of Teutoburg. Yet it was more than ever necessary to employ the discontented legions, who had placed themselves without reserve under their young Cæsar's orders, and to precipitate them headlong on the Elbe was the surest way of averting a march upon the Tiber. The soldiers themselves were burning for occupation; they were anxious to wash out in blood the stain of mutiny, which ever left a dark and burning spot on the conscience of the Roman legionary.

He determines  
to employ the  
discontented  
soldiers.

During the crisis of these military outbreaks, the emperor's conduct was marked by consummate artifice and caution. He successfully evaded binding himself to any precise stipulation by which his supreme authority could be compromised, while he allowed his son and nephew to treat with the mutineers, and amuse them with specious hopes beyond their power to confirm.<sup>2</sup> His advisers at Rome urged him to go in person and quell the sedition by the majesty of his presence, as, until the latest periods of his reign, Augustus, on every great emergency, had quitted the city for the provinces.

His artifice in  
dealing with  
them.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 31.: "Magna spe fore ut Germanicus Cæsar imperium alterius pati nequiret."

<sup>2</sup> The cry for a sixteen years' service seems to have been listened to, but Tiberius soon afterwards took occasion to disregard his concession, and fixed twenty years for the regular legionary term. Tac. *Ann.* i. 78.: "Ita proxime seditionis male consulta . . . abolita in posterum."

Always professing to be about to take some decided step, Tiberius continued to allege excuses for indecision and inactivity. He was aware that at Rome he was supported by the name and influence of the senate, which as a body was entirely devoted to the imperial government. In the camp, on the contrary, he knew not on whom he might depend, or how far the traditions of military allegiance still retained their potency. By remaining within the precincts of the city he could escape direct comparison with Drusus and Germanicus, from which he shrank with the instinct of self-distrust; and there he was under the protection of the armed force of the capital, which at the moment of assuming power he had bound to his service by the most solemn formulas. Moreover, his own jealous nature suggested that to whichever of the two camps, the Pannonian or the German, he should repair, he might awaken the jealousy of the other. Finally he argued, it rather befitted the majesty of the imperial power to judge of the complaints of its subjects at a distance, than to wrangle with them on the spot. Nevertheless, to break the force of the petulant murmurs which assailed him, Tiberius pretended to have resolved to quit Rome for the frontiers, and caused preparations to be made for his anticipated departure. But first the winter season, and when that was past, the pressure of business at home, still furnished him with pleas for delay. His own ministers and intimates were long deceived as to his real intentions, the citizens still longer, and longest of all the provinces themselves.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile he was anxious to court the good opinion of the senators by the general conduct of his administration at home. In matters of personal concern he rivalled and even exceeded the moderation of Augustus himself. He interposed with specious words to restrain the extravagant compliments showered on him by the nobles, and checked the servile impatience with

Policy of Tiberius in the Senate.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 47.: "Ceterum, ut jam jamque iturus, legit comites; conquist impedimenta, adornavit naves: mox hiemem aut negotia varie causatus, primo prudentes, dein vulgum, diutissime provincias sefellit."

which they pressed forward to swear obedience to his enactments, not only past but future. In the senate he suffered all men to discuss his measures with freedom, and propose motions of their own, on which he was often among the last to declare his sentiments. He was proud of the appellation of Prince, but would not endure to be addressed as Emperor or Dominus.<sup>1</sup> While he encouraged the appointment of priests, rituals, and games in honour of his deified predecessor, he vehemently repelled the preposterous adoration proffered to himself by citizens or provincials. Yet the moderation of Tiberius was simply politic, and was tinged by no ray of generosity or clemency. The hapless Ovid he suffered still to languish in the exile from which neither entreaties nor flatteries availed to release him.<sup>2</sup> The lapse of fifteen years had not softened his spite against his miserable consort, who was now treated with even increased rigour in her confinement at Rhegium, till she sank under her sorrows and possibly under the most cruel privations, in the first months of her husband's elevation.<sup>3</sup> Her paramour, Sempronius Gracchus, retained in an island off the coast of Africa during the lifetime of Augustus, was slain by one of the earliest mandates of his successor. The only trait of gentleness the new ruler exhibited was in his behaviour to his mother, whom he never ceased to regard with respect and even with awe, allowing himself to be guided or thwarted by her to the last, with the docility of his childish years.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, though he suffered Livia to assume great authority over himself, he strictly forbade, as a Roman matron, her taking any ostensible share in public affairs, and curtailed

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lvi. 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> The date of Ovid's death, "æt. 60," may range between April 770 and April 771.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. Ann. i. 53. The death of the elder Julia is placed by this writer within the year 767, which embraced little more than three months of the new principate. Yet he speaks of her death as the result of the long and deliberate severities of the new emperor: "Inopia ac tæbe longa peremit, obscuram fore necem longinquitate exilii ratus."

<sup>4</sup> Dion, lvi. 12.



the excessive honours the senate would have lavished upon her.

But we must return from Rome to the frontiers once more, with the historian Tacitus, and follow the culminating star of the hero Germanicus. No sooner had he Germanicus leads the legions across the Rhine. quelled the sedition in his camp, than the young Cæsar, postponing to a fitter moment the business of the census at Lugdunum, transported his impatient soldiers across the Rhine, and promised them an opportunity of effacing the stain of disaffection in the blood of the national enemies. The slaughter of Varus was yet unavenged, and the last incursion of Tiberius had failed to restore the authority of the empire on the right bank of the river. An attempt, indeed, had been made to define the frontier of a Transrhenane province between the Lippe and the Ruhr by the line of the Cæsian forest, and a supplemental rampart of wood and earth; but this work had been left incomplete, and Germanicus now cut his way through it without hesitation.<sup>1</sup> He was resolved to place the bulwarks of the Roman empire much further to the east. Dividing his forces into four corps (wedges the Romans called them, and the name was well applied to the service in which they were employed, of breaking their way through every obstacle, and splitting to the heart the vast region before them), he swept a large extent of territory with fire and sword, and startled from their lairs the warriors of many formidable nations. The Marsi, whom he first reached, were taken unprepared, and made to suffer severely; the Bructeri, Tubantes, and Usipetes retreated before him, or evaded his onset, and wide as he spread his battalions he could not force them to join battle. Harassed on the flanks and rear, it was only by a great effort that he succeeded in shaking off the enemy whom he

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 50.: "Propero agmine sylvam Cæsiam, limitemque a Tiberio conceptum, scindit." Of the Cæsian forest nothing is known except from this passage. It extended probably along the right bank of the Rhine between the streams mentioned in the text, and the lines commenced by Tiberius were a rampart of earth and palisades beyond it.

could not assail, and eventually bringing back his troops with no great loss to their winter quarters. This incursion, it must be remembered, was made towards the close of the year, when he could not expect to obtain any considerable results. Tiberius, it is said, received the account of these proceedings with mixed feelings. The suppression of the mutiny relieved him from anxiety; but he was far from satisfied with the sacrifice, as he deemed it, of dignity, and the compromise of state principles by which it had been achieved.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless he consented to sanction the pledges his son and nephew had given; and in addressing the senate he enlarged on the merits of Germanicus, while he affected to speak with modest reserve on those of his own son Drusus. Nor did he fail to crown the trifling exploits of this desultory incursion with the honour of a triumph, the celebration of which, however, was to be deferred till the conclusion of the war, and the anticipated conquest of Germany.

In the following year, A. U. 768, Germanicus recommenced his operations at an earlier season, and with more definite plans. He had equipped a force of eight legions for the field, with perhaps an equal number of auxiliaries and irregular skirmishers; four of these legions were directed to cross the Rhine from the great camp at Vetera, under the command of the able and experienced Cæcina, and penetrate into the territory of the Cherusci; the other four were led by the Caesar himself into the district of the Taunus, and were destined to keep in check the Chatti, whose powerful confederation was ever ready to harass the flank of a Roman armament in the north, or even to seize the opportunity of invading the Gaulish province. The resistance opposed by the Chatti in the field was easily overcome. The Romans destroyed their stronghold, known by the name of Mattium; and having

Renewed operations of Germanicus.

A. D. 18.  
A. U. 768.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus adds (*Ann.* i. 52.) that he was mortified by the glory Germanicus acquired. It is possible that the young general's popularity at Rome caused his success to be magnified or extolled beyond its deserts. It was evidently far too slender to cause in itself any reasonable ground of jealousy.

thus crippled their means of annoyance, returned to the Rhine, to coöperate in another direction with the expedition of Cæcina. The short interval which had elapsed since the defeat of Varus had sufficed to divide the victorious Cherusci into hostile parties. Segestes, the favourer of the Romans, besieged by his son-in-law Arminius, solicited their relief. He could offer, in return for their assistance, many spoils of the Varian disaster; and was able to deliver to them many noble women, the wives or children of the chiefs of his nation. Among these was Thusnelda, his own daughter, the consort of Arminius, a woman of high spirit, and more attached to the cause of her husband than that of her parent. These important hostages were transferred to the other side of the Rhine. The wife of Arminius was sent to Ravenna in Italy, where the child she bore him was bred in the fashions of his captors, and lived, we are told, to experience some sport of adverse fortune, the particulars of which have failed to descend to us.<sup>1</sup> The division to whom this easy success had fallen was recalled once more to the Roman quarters, and Tiberius himself conferred on Germanicus the title of imperator.

Arminius and his faithful Cherusicans were exasperated at this treachery of their old chief, which seems indeed to have disgusted even those among them who would have laboured for a compromise between the hostile powers. The defection of Inguiomerus, a kinsman of Arminius, but one who had leant hitherto to the Roman side, convinced Germanicus that there was no longer room for craft and diplomacy, but that the whole of north Germany must be thoroughly subdued by the sword, or finally abandoned. The temporizing policy of Augustus, who hoped gradually to sap the spirit of liberty by the charm of Roman caresses, must now be regarded as a failure;

Germanicus revisits the scene of the slaughter of Varus.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus related it in his *Annals*; and it must have found a place in one of the lost portions of that work, probably in the great lacuna in the fifth book; which refers to the date u. c. 784.: "*Educatus Ravennæ puer quo mox ludibrio conflictatus sit in tempore memorabo.*" *Ann.* i. 58.

insult and injury had exasperated the German chiefs beyond hope of reconciliation; arms alone could decide whether the empire should be extended to the Elbe, or restrained henceforth within the barrier of the Rhine. This was the result to which the young Cæsar's impetuosity had brought affairs on the frontier: it remained to be seen whether the same ardent spirit could effect the conquest of the people whom it had so thoroughly alienated. Towards the summer his plans were matured for a simultaneous attack in three directions on the Cherusci, as the heads of a general confederacy. Cæcina was ordered to lead his force through the country of the Bructeri to the Ems; a body of cavalry was dispatched by a more northerly route along the borders of the Frisii to the same destination; while Germanicus himself embarked with four legions, to coast the shores of the continent, and enter the river at its mouth. The three corps effected their junction with that precision to which the Romans had now attained by repeated experiments, having swept away all resistance throughout the region between the Lippe and the ocean, which their eagles had before scarcely penetrated. Cæcina had overthrown the Bructeri in an engagement of some magnitude, and had recovered the eagle of the Nineteenth legion. The division of Germanicus ascended the waters of the Ems, or skirted its banks, till it reached the forest of Teutoburg, where it explored the vestiges of the great disaster after the lapse of six years, and traced with mournful interest the remains of the camps of Varus, which showed by their diminished size and unfinished defences the failing strength and decreasing numbers of the flying force at each successive nightfall. The soldiers collected the bones of their slaughtered countrymen, still lying, some in heaps together, others scattered at unequal distances, and paid them funeral rites, erecting over the remains a monumental barrow of which the Cæsar himself placed the first sod.<sup>1</sup> Advanc-

Funeral honours paid to the remains of the slaughtered Romans.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 61, 62.: "Cupido Cæsarem invadit solvendi suprema militibus ducique . . . primum exstruendo tumulo cespitem Cæsar posuit."

ing further, their excited feelings were relieved by an opportunity for action. Arminius had availed himself of the recesses of his forests to conceal a portion of his forces, and the Romans were too eager for the onset to take due precautions against surprise. The presence of mind of Germanicus saved them from a severe disaster; but though the victory remained at last undecided, it became prudent to withdraw from the field, and retire to the stations already fortified on the Ems. From hence, on the approach of the winter season, they were led back to the frontier by the same routes by which they had advanced. Cæcina making his way through woods and marshes to the head of the causeway of Domitian, was attacked by Arminius, and reduced to perilous straits. Enclosed within his lines by overpowering numbers, he owed his deliverance to the rashness of the Germans, who once repulsed were easily thrown into confusion by a dexterous manœuvre. A great slaughter ensued among them, from which Arminius made his escape with some loss of honour. The Romans thus relieved continued their homeward march, and arrived in safety at Vetera, where the rumour of their surprise and destruction had already preceded them. The residents of the left bank, in their alarm, would have broken their communications, and abandoned the fugitives to their fate, had not Agrippina shown herself worthy of her husband's and her father's courage. Placing herself at the head of the bridge, from which she refused to move, she awaited the return of the remnant of the rout; and as the long train of four unbroken legions defiled, with ensigns displayed, before her, she addressed them with the warmest acknowledgment of their deserts, her heart swelling with wifely pride and emotion.<sup>1</sup>

The return of Germanicus himself was subjected to perils of another kind, and clouded with serious disasters. He had descended the Ems on board his vessels; but when he put

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 69. The writer obtained this anecdote from the elder Pliny, who wrote an account of the German campaigns. Vetera Castra is the modern Xanten, nearly opposite to Wesel. Mannert. *Geogr.* iii. 431.

out to sea, among the shallows of the Frisian coast, he found it necessary to lighten them. For this purpose he disembarked two legions, charging them to conduct their march homeward within sight of the ocean. Obeying these directions, however, too closely, a great number of the men were lost in the equinoctial tides, which overflowed the level shores, and swept away a large portion of their stores and baggage.<sup>1</sup> The main strength of the legions was at last collected once more in winter quarters; but to recruit them to their proper footing, and supply their full complement of horses and equipments, it was necessary to put under requisition, not the Rhenish provinces only, but the whole extent of Gaul, and even Spain and Italy. The collection of means of transport for such forces as the Roman generals moved year by year in these regions, over wide tracts of uncultivated heath or woodland, from which every vehicle and beast of burden was swept by the retreating natives, must have taxed to the utmost the resources of all the provinces of the West. The more we study the history of these expensive though fruitless campaigns, the more shall we admire the powers of the Roman government, the effective organization of every branch of its service, and the well-trained energies of all its officers, from the imperator to the centurion and primipile.<sup>2</sup>

Disaster of Germanicus on his return by sea.

It appears from this narrative that the success of Germanicus in these forays had been dubious at best. He had left no more solid monument of his prowess than the barrow erected over the Varian remains; and this the natives indignantly levelled as soon as his back was turned. No fortress had been established to check the enemy's return into the tracts from which he had been for a moment dislodged; no roads had been formed to assist the advance of a future expedition; the savage mode of warfare which the invader had as usual

Tiberius murmurs at the slender results of these campaigns.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. i. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. 71.: "Ad supplenda exercitus damna certavere Gallia, Hispania, Italia; quod cuique promptum, arma, equos, aurum, offerentes."

permitted himself in ravaging the country with fire and sword, had made it not less untenable by Roman settlers than by its native possessors. Tiberius was far from satisfied with these results; and while he suffered the citizens to regard the surrender of Segestes and the capture of Thusnelda, the sole trophies of the campaign, as substantial tokens of success, for which not Germanicus only, but his lieutenants also, might deserve the triumphal insignia, he was at heart deeply vexed with the real failure of the year's exertions. His ill-humour vented itself in murmurs against his nephew's conduct, who had damped, he said, the courage of the legionaries by showing them the bloody traces of a Roman defeat; he even pretended that, in performing funeral rites, Germanicus had profaned the sanctity of his Augural office. He cavilled at the spirited movement of Agrippina, in which, he insinuated, she had overstepped the duties of her sex, to ingratiate herself with his legions. What would be left, he asked, for the emperors themselves to do, if their wives could venture to pass along the lines of the maniples, to approach the standards, and offer with their own hands largesses to the soldiers. He complained that the mutinous spirit of the army had been conjured by the intrigues of a woman, when the name of the chief of the commonwealth had failed to coerce it.<sup>1</sup>

The assumption of so ungracious an attitude towards the defenders of the national interests, in the midst of foreign foes and domestic sedition, was at best impolitic; the Romans regarded it, moreover, as unjust and base, and unworthy of the descendant of their magnanimous Cæsars. They ascribed it, however, less to the jealous temper of their ruler himself, than to the sinister influence of a low-born favourite, impatient of a rival's successes, who now prompted his master's apprehensions, and suggested the recall of Germanicus that he might no longer spend the blood and treasure of the empire in schemes for

The Romans  
offended at this  
jealousy.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 69. "Compressam a muliere seditionem, cui nomen Principis obsistere non quiverit."

his own advancement, from which the nation derived no benefit.<sup>1</sup> This fatal adviser will be brought more formally on the stage at a later period: it is enough to say of him now that Tiberius listened with complacency to his questionable counsel. But the hesitation now becoming habitual with him in all public affairs still prevented him from acting upon it; while the young Cæsar, burning for martial fame, and equally unconscious, perhaps, both of the suspicions raised against him, and of the failure of his recent enterprise, was redoubling his preparations for another campaign, and dreaming of more conclusive successes.<sup>2</sup>

The failure of the last expedition was ascribed at the Roman quarters to no defect in the valour of the soldiers, or the skill of their chiefs, but simply to the natural difficulties of the route they had chosen, which lay further to the north, and was more embarrassed by swamps, forests, and broad rivers, than the regions with which the invaders acquainted themselves in their earlier operations. It may be supposed, moreover, that the inhospitable wilderness was exhausted of its scanty resources. Accordingly, Germanicus prepared a naval armament on a larger scale than before, which he collected in the island of the Rhine and Wahal, and directed through the channel of the lake Flevus to the ocean.<sup>3</sup> Before embarking, however, he sent his legate C. Silius, to make a demonstration against the Chatti in the south, and led himself a force of six legions along the valley of the Lippe, to secure the roads and strongholds, and provide for the defence and supply of his armies on their return.<sup>4</sup> This done he transported the main strength of his armaments in a thousand vessels, to the mouth of the Ems, thus saving them a great amount of time and fatigue. Leaving his

Third campaign of Germanicus.

A. D. 18.  
A. U. 769.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Accendebat hæc onerabatque Sejanus."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> He descended into this lake by the Fossa Drusiana, the channel which Drusus cut, as before mentioned, from the Rhine to the Yssel.

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 6.



ships at their anchorage under sufficient protection, he then directed his march towards the south-east, so as to strike the bank of the Weser at a spot where the Germans had assembled a large force. In the ranks of the invading army there was a brother of Arminius entrusted with a command, whose fidelity to the Romans was attested by the loss of an eye in their service, and by the surname of Flavius, which he had adopted as the client of a Roman officer. Arminius, we are told, demanded a parley with the renegade across the stream which divided the hostile arrays; and when, according to the agreement, they were left to converse alone, began by inquiring the occasion of his wound. Flavius specified the place and the engagement. *And what, demanded the other, was your reward? Increase of pay, a gold chain and chaplet, with other military distinctions,* was the reply. And when the German freeman retorted with a sneer on these *vile badges of servitude*, the Romanized Flavius continued unabashed to urge on him the obvious inducements to submission, such as the magnitude of the Roman power, the clemency of the emperor, the kindness with which his wife and child had been treated, and, on the other hand, the sure penalty of resistance. Arminius replied by appealing with fervour to the love of their country, the memory of their fathers, and the venerable names of their ancestral divinities: he contrasted with pride his own position, as the chief of his own people, with the subaltern rank of his recreant brother. From argument the debate was presently swayed to rebukes and mutual invectives, until, exasperated as they were, they would have plunged into the stream and decided their controversy in its waves had not the comrades of Flavius interfered and carried him away, leaving Arminius vainly defying with uplifted voice and hands the adversaries whom he could not reach.<sup>1</sup>

The next morning the Romans effected the passage of the

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. ii. 9, 10.

Weser in the face of the enemy, not unwilling perhaps to give way, and draw them further into the heart of a thick jungle with a broad river in the rear. In the depths of a sacred forest the Germans had collected the forces of many nations, and were preparing to assail the invaders' camp by night. The imagination of our eloquent historian Tacitus kindles with the approaching catastrophe of the great epic of the German wars, and from the Homeric dialogue of his Flavius and Arminius, he proceeds to charm us with the night adventure of his hero Germanicus. Not trusting entirely to the reports of his brave but sanguine officers,—and the spirit of flattery, he thought, might sway the representations of his personal attendants,—the emperor resolved to explore, disguised, and at night, the real temper of the soldiers, and ascertain how far he might rely on the courage which had never yet been fairly confronted with the victors of the Teutoburg. Wrapt in his Gaulish bearskin, and attended by a single companion, he traversed the lanes of the camp and leant over the tent-ropes. The soldiers he found everywhere vying with one another in the praise of their young general: one boasted of his noble descent, another of his manly beauty; his patience, his kindness, his serene temper were in the mouths of all. To-morrow, they said, in the ranks, they would prove their gratitude and affection: they would sacrifice to vengeance and glory the faithless foe who had violated the peace of Rome. At this moment an emissary of Arminius riding to the foot of the rampart, proclaimed aloud in the Latin tongue his leader's promise of wives, lands, and a daily largess to all who would abandon the Roman service and take refuge in the ranks of freedom. The offer was received with shouts of indignant scorn. *Let but the day break, exclaimed the legionaries, let but battle be joined, and we will seize each for himself on wives and lands and plunder.* Germanicus withdrew well pleased with the result of his experiment, which was succeeded by a dream of favourable omen. The harangue he addressed next morning to his men contains a vivid

Germanicus explores the courage of his soldiers.

description of the disadvantage under which the barbarian laboured, from the size and weight of his weapons, his want of defensive armour, his slow and unwieldy motions, his ignorance of discipline, and impatience both of toil and pain. Everything that made him most terrible at first sight was found, when examined, an encumbrance and a defect. Encouraged and confirmed in their hopes and expectations, the Romans prepared cheerfully for the combat.<sup>1</sup> On the other

Arminius encourages the Germans.

hand, Arminius and his associates were not less prompt and energetic. Each at the head of his own people described the Roman army as the mere remnant of the Varian legions, the swiftest of foot, who had saved themselves once by flight from German vengeance: they were no other than the recreants of the Rhenish camps, who would rather rise against their own officers than rally in the face of the enemy. These, they said, were the slaves who had been reduced by stripes, the wretches who had skulked from pursuit of the brave Cherusci to the furthest shores of the ocean. Nor were the Germans suffered to forget how cruel and rapacious these ruffians had shown themselves in their moments of success: the freedom of the patriot warriors was the last possession left them; let them now defend it with their lives.<sup>2</sup>

The position of the Germans occupied the declivity of the hills which bounded the valley of the Weser, extending into the broad plain at their foot and resting on a wood in the rear, which, from the absence of undergrowth, presented no obstacle to a retreat.<sup>3</sup>

The Romans, however, having crossed the stream at various points, contrived by skilful movements to outflank their opponents; and while the cavalry gained the wood behind

Great battle and victory of the Romans.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Tacitus calls the spot "Campus cui Idistaviso nomen." There is no clue for identifying it. See the article on the word in Smith's *Dictionary of Geography*, in which Grimm is said to have shown that the plain was probably called Idisiaviso, that is, *the maiden's meadow*, from idisi, a maiden, and wiese, a meadow.

them, the main strength of the legions engaged their attention in the plain. The front line of the Germans, drawn up at the foot of the hills, was driven back and sought refuge in the wood, at the same moment that the bodies kept in reserve behind, assailed by the Roman horse, were dislodged from its shelter, and driven headlong towards the plain. The Cherusci, the bravest and steadiest of the native forces, had occupied the centre of the declivity; but neither their resolute courage, nor the skill and vigour of their leader Arminius, availed to sustain them against the overwhelming pressure of the conflicting tides of fugitives on either side. Thus thrown into confusion, the rout of the Germans was rapid and complete. Arminius and Inguimerus still maintained the unequal contest with conspicuous gallantry; but, hemmed in between the advancing forces of the Romans, their destruction seemed inevitable, and they owed their lives, as was suspected, to the treachery of some German auxiliaries, who suffered them to burst through their ranks, disfigured and wounded. Broken in front and rear, the remnant of their host took flight at every point where they could find an opening: great numbers were slain in attempting to cross the river before, many more fell in the wood behind them, where they climbed the trees for safety, but were transfixed with arrows, or crushed by the felling of the trees themselves: over an area of ten miles in width the ground was thickly strewn with the bodies of the slain; and if the combat itself had been soon decided, the pursuit and slaughter continued without intermission till nightfall. At the close of the day the victors reared a great mound of earth, which they surmounted with the arms of their slaughtered enemies, and the chains found ready in their camp for binding their captives. On the summit they raised a stone pillar inscribed with the names of the conquered tribes; and, finally, the army saluted the absent Tiberius with the title of Imperator, ascribing the fortune of the day, with redoubled loyalty, to his sacred auspices.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 16-18.

Renewed engagement, and final success of the Romans.

Yet no sooner had they completed these memorials of their triumph than the worsted foe rallied, it seems, for another contest. Doubtless the victory had been far less complete than the flatterers of the empire or the panegyrist of Germanicus had represented it. The barbarians, we are assured, were about to fly beyond the Elbe, and relinquish their territories for ever, when the report of the erection of this insulting monument roused them from their panic and despair. Once more flinging all timid counsels to the winds, they seized a spot surrounded by woods and morasses, and defended by an old native earthwork, and there collecting in a mass formidable alike from its numbers and resolution, defied the advance of the conqueror. Here invasion reached its limits. Germanicus indeed led his legions steadily to the foot of the well-manned lines. He made skilful dispositions for attacking them. He forced the mound, entered the narrow area within which the Germans were thronged densely together, with a swamp behind, and incapable of retreat. The struggle was furious and bloody. Everything was against the Germans; the closeness of the combat, in which their long swords and even their unwieldy frames were a disadvantage; the recollection of their late defeat; and the consciousness that their last stronghold was stormed before their faces. Even Arminius had lost his gallant spirit; broken by repeated defeats or the wounds he had sustained, he was less decided in his orders and less conspicuous in the medley. Never, on the other hand, did Germanicus more strenuously exert himself. He strove to carry with his own hand the victory his dispositions had brought within his grasp. Throwing his helmet from his head, that no Roman might fail to recognize him, he adjured his soldiers, in the midst of their ranks, to redouble blow on blow, and give no quarter: this, he cried, was no day for making captives, but for utterly destroying the German nation. Multitudes of the barbarians were slain, while the invaders acknowledged but a trifling loss. Nevertheless the legions, we are told, were recalled from the scene of

slaughter to their camp for the night, while we hear nothing of the rout or retreat of the enemy. It is admitted that the engagement of the cavalry in another quarter was indecisive. No song of triumph arose on the dispersion of the great German confederacy, at the abandonment of their country, or their flight behind the Elbe; there is no word of their suing for peace or pardon. If Germanicus erected yet another trophy, and emblazoned it with a flaunting inscription, proclaiming that he had subdued all the nations between the Rhine and Elbe, the narrator of his exploits himself confesses that the boast was vain and presumptuous. Of all the native tribes the Angrivarii alone offered to capitulate; but their humble submission appeased, it is said, the vengeance of the conqueror, and he consented to accept it as a national acknowledgment of defeat.<sup>1</sup>

Nor was it from any anxiety about his own return that Germanicus acquiesced so easily in this pretended pacification. The second month of summer saw his legions withdraw from their advanced posts in the Cheruscian territory, and retire, some by land, but a large force on board the numerous flotilla which had wafted them to the mouth of the Ems.<sup>2</sup> The vessels were assailed by severe gales, and once more suffered terribly from the violence of the winds and waves, though the fears of the timid mariners may have magnified the loss and danger. These disasters, however, sufficed to raise the Germans again in arms, so little had they been dispirited by the dubious success of the recent invasion. Germanicus, always prompt and active, however questionable we may think his skill in conducting, or forethought in planning, his expeditions, collected his troops without delay, and by a rapid incursion into the lands of the Marsi and Chatti, checked at least the contagion of their revolt. The recovery of the last of the

Return of Germanicus again  
unprosperous.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 19-22.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 23.: "Adulta jam æstate:" thus explained by Servius on Virg. *Ecl.* x. 74.; Georg. i. 43.

Recovery of the  
last of the Va-  
rian eagles.

Varian eagles shed a final gleam of glory over the enterprises of Rome in this quarter. Once more the legions were led back to their winter stations. The young Cæsar was assured that the enemy had never felt such consternation and despair, as when they found him prepared to take the field at the moment when his fleet was lying wrecked on their shores. Never were they so much disposed to entertain counsels of submission, as during the winter that followed. One more campaign, he was convinced, would complete the conquest of the North. But while meditating on his future triumphs, he was admonished by many letters from Tiberius, that it was time to abandon projects which had reaped in fact nothing but recurring disappointments. It was time, the emperor suggested, to change the policy which had hitherto reigned in the Roman quarters, and relinquishing the employment of military force, which had been attended with grave losses both by sea and land, trust to the surer and safer method of engaging the enemy in domestic dissensions. Closely as the German confederates had been bound together under the pressure of foreign aggression, seeds of disunion were still rife among them, and the policy of intrigue, ever patient and watchful, could hardly fail in the end to undermine the nationality of the barbarians. If further laurels, he added, were yet to be gained by arms, it was fair to leave the harvest to be gleaned by the strippling Drusus, for whose maiden sword no other foe but the Germans was left.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 26. Suetonius (*Tib.* 52.) adds that Tiberius was generally reputed to have disparaged the *glorious successes* of Germanicus, as prejudicial to the public interests. It is vexatious, however, to observe how little reliance we can place on the panegyric of Tacitus. His story of the last campaign bears strong features of romance. The interview of the German brothers is an heroic episode. It is not usual with ordinary mortals to converse across a stream an hundred yards in width. The night watch of Germanicus, though not in itself improbable, is suspiciously in unison with the epic colour of the general narrative; and the splendid victories ascribed to him are evidently belied by the results. The account of the shipwreck of the flotilla is a clang of turgid extravagances, amplified perhaps from the statement which Pliny may

The reasoning of Tiberius was specious, and the course he suggested required only vigilance and perseverance to be fully successful. But in laying down a line of traditional policy, which might demand the care of many years, and of more than one or two generations to effect it, he could pledge neither himself nor his successors to persist in it. In fact, the central government ceased from this time to take any warm interest in the subjugation of the Germans; and the dissensions of their states and princes, which peace was not slow in developing, attracted no Roman emissaries to the barbarian camps, and rarely led the legions beyond the frontier, which was now allowed to recede finally to the Rhine.<sup>1</sup> The conquests indeed of Germanicus had been wholly visionary: the language of Tacitus is equally extravagant both in vaunting his triumphs, and in blazoning his disasters; and the almost total silence of Dion, a far more sober authority, on the exploits of the popular hero, stamps his campaigns with merited insignificance. Nevertheless there seems no reason to doubt that the discipline of the legions, and the conduct of their officers, even without the genius of a Sulla or a Cæsar at their head, must gradually have broken the resistance of the northern freemen, and that little more of toil and patience was wanting to make the Elbe the permanent frontier of their conquests. This accession of territory would have materially abridged the long line of the national defences, and the garrisons of the Elbe and Danube might have afforded each other mutual support in the peril of a barbarian invasion. It is not impossible that the result of one or two more campaigns at this critical moment might have delayed for a hundred years the eventual overthrow of the Roman Empire. It would be too much to say that the failure of such a result is to be regretted; nor can we venture to lament, for the

The frontiers  
of the empire  
finally bounded  
by the Rhine.

have founded, with little discrimination, upon the fears and fancies of the survivors.

<sup>1</sup> We shall trace at a later period some further advances of the empire between the upper Rhine and Danube.



sake of the Germans themselves, that they were not at this period reduced to subjection to a power of higher and finer organization than their own. But while the gallantry with which the Germans defended their savage homes must always excite our admiration, while we applaud their courage and self-devotion, and thrill at the echoes of their shouts of defiance and songs of triumph, it will be well to guard against an unreflecting sympathy with that misnamed liberty for which they so bravely contended. The liberty of the Germans was at best only the licence of a few chiefs and warriors, backed by a dark and a bloody superstition, in which the mass of the people, the bravest and least corrupted part of the nation, had no genuine share.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the false colours he has aimed at throwing over it, the picture of Teutonic freedom which Tacitus gives us is gloomy and revolting, with its solitary caves or wigwams in the forest, its sexes undistinguished in dress, its women, cared for indeed, but not for their charms or virtues, but as beasts of burden and implements of labour. That it was powerless to effect any progress, or to rise of itself to a higher sphere of civilization, appears from the continued barbarism of the four succeeding centuries, during which it roamed its forests unassailed by Rome, and constrained by no foreign pressure. The instincts of Order and Devotion, which distinguished the northern conquerors of Europe, lay undeveloped in the germ, till, in the course of Providence, they met the forms of Law and of Religion which they were destined so happily to impregnate. As with their own lusty youths, to whom

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, in his curious but fanciful picture of Teutonic life and manners, would make it appear that the whole body of freemen were equal and independent; but this is contrary to all experience, and is opposed to the usage of client or retainership, which seems to have been common in Germany as well as in Gaul. The slaves of the Germans, as our author himself remarks (*German.* 28.), were not domestic, like the Roman, but attached to the soil; they were in fact not slaves, but serfs, and as such we may be assured that they bore arms in their lords' following. The German polity was probably no other than clanship, under which a system of the grossest tyranny is upheld by a perverted sentiment of honour.

the commerce of the sexes was forbidden till they had reached the fulness of manly vigour, the long celibate of German intelligence may seem designed by a superior Wisdom to crown it with inexhaustible fertility.<sup>1</sup>

The offer of the consulship, which the emperor now tendered to his nephew, was equivalent to a command to abandon the camp; and Germanicus was compelled, with sore reluctance, to relinquish his visions of immortal glory for the empty pageant of municipal honours. It was natural that he should see, in this sudden abridgment of his triumphs, not the prudence but the jealousy of his chief; and such unquestionably was the general view of the army, delighted with his liberality and condescension, and of the people, not unwilling to form the most unfavourable judgment on the acts of a ruler so destitute of the genial graces which captivate an unreflecting populace. Yet it cannot in fairness be imputed as a crime to the emperor, if he desired to break the connexion between his kinsman and the distant legions of the Rhine, which had already expressed their readiness to carry him to Rome and place him on the throne of the Cæsars. Germanicus, with the generosity and perhaps carelessness which belonged to his character, had given some ground of umbrage by offering largesses to the soldiers from his own resources, such as, under a monarchical regime, can only proceed safely from the monarch himself; and Tiberius merely followed the policy of his predecessor in allowing no more than two or three successive campaigns to the same leader, beneath the same eagles, and in the same quarter of the empire.

Germanicus is recalled to Rome.

With the close of the year 769, Germanicus quitted the scene of his high-spirited efforts, being summoned to celebrate the triumph which was offered him in lieu of victory.<sup>2</sup> Of this flattering distinction, indeed, the emperor took to himself the lion's share.

Triumph of Germanicus.

A. D. 17.  
A. U. 770.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *German.* 20.: "Sera juvenum Venus, eoque inexhausta pubertas."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 41.: "Bellumque, quia conficere prohibitum erat, pro confecto habebatur."

The triumphal arch, which was erected on the slope of the Capitoline, was designated by the name, not of Germanicus, but of Tiberius.<sup>1</sup> The recovery of the eagles of Varus, and the overthrow of the Germans, were together blazoned on the medals which commemorated the solemnity.<sup>2</sup> As the victor approached the city, the populace, full of enthusiasm, poured forth from the gates to the twentieth milestone to meet him, and the ardour of the prætorians, the body-guards of the emperor himself, was not less conspicuous than if they had served under his colours or partaken of his benefactions.<sup>3</sup> The triumph was celebrated on the 26th of May; the Cherusci, the Chatti, the Angrivarii, and generally the nations between the Rhine and Elbe, were specified as the vanquished enemy.<sup>4</sup> Captives were forthcoming, of noble birth and distinction among their people, to adorn the ceremony; and it was without remorse, without even compassion, that the Romans beheld Thusnelda, the betrayed wife of Arminius, led before them, with the infant child whom she had borne in servitude and sorrow.<sup>5</sup> The spoils of war were also exhibited, and the mountains and rivers of Germany, together with the battles themselves, were represented in pictures or emblematically designated. But the citizens gazed at none of these shows so intently as at the figure of the young emperor himself, conspicuous for the manly graces of his per-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Fine anni arcus propter ædem Saturni ob recepta signa cum Varo amissa, ductu Germanici, auspiciis Tiberii . . . dicatur." This arch of Tiberius, as it is called, but I know not on what precise authority, stood on the slope of the Clivus Capitolinus. Dezobry supposes that it was small and plain, from its having apparently been erected and dedicated in the course of one year. Another arch of Tiberius was erected by the emperor Claudius near the theatre of Pompeius. Suet. *Claud.* 11.

<sup>2</sup> See Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 209.: "Signis receptis devictis Germanis." Tiberius took the title of Germanicus (Dion, lvi. 8.), but declined that of Pater Patriæ. Tac. *Ann.* i. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 4.

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 41.: "C. Cæcilio, L. Pomponio, coss., Germanicus Cæsar, A. D. vii. Kal. Junias, triumphavit de Cheruscia, Chattisque, et Angrivariis."

<sup>5</sup> Strabo, vii. p. 291.: who gives the child the name of Thumelicus.

son, and surrounded in his chariot by the five male descendants of his fruitful union with Agrippina. Surely there was no room, behind so well-plenished an equipage, for the slave who attended the happiest of heroes in the crisis of his felicity, and whispered in his ear that he was only mortal ! Yet the spectators at least required no such grisly memento. In the midst of their brilliant jubilee they were smitten with a painful misgiving : they remembered how their affection for the father, Drusus, had been blighted by sudden disappointment, how Marcellus, the uncle, had been snatched away in the glow of his youthful popularity : *brief and ill-starred*, they murmured to themselves, *were the loves of the Roman people.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 41. : "Breves et infaustos populi Romani amores." The list of early bereavements of the same class might be enlarged with the names of Cains and Lucius Cæsar, and even of Agrippa Postumus ; but I do not venture to step beyond the lines traced by Tacitus, and attach to any of these the same painful reminiscences he has specified in the case of the others.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

MISSION OF GERMANICUS TO THE EAST, AND OF DRUSUS TO ILLYRICUM.—RETIREMENT OF MAROBODUUS, AND DEATH OF ARMINIUS.—GERMANICUS JOURNEYS THROUGH GREECE AND ASIA MINOR.—INTRIGUES OF PISO AND PLANCINA AGAINST HIM.—HE SETTLES THE AFFAIRS OF ARMENIA, AND VISITS EGYPT.—HIS SICKNESS AND DEATH IMPUTED TO PISO.—GRIEF OF THE CITIZENS.—PISO ATTEMPTS TO SEIZE THE GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA.—IS BAFFLED AND SENT TO ROME.—THE FRIENDS OF GERMANICUS ACCUSE HIM BEFORE THE SENATE.—HIS DEFENCE, SUICIDE, AND CONDEMNATION.—TIBERIUS FREE FROM SUSPICION OF THE MURDER OF GERMANICUS.—IMPOSTURE OF CLEMENS.—INTRIGUES OF LIBO DRUSUS.—DETERIORATION IN THE CONDUCT OF TIBERIUS.—INFLUENCE OF LIVIA OVER HIM, AND OF SEJANUS. (A. D. 17-20.), A. U. 770-778.

THE cloud which lowered on the countenance of the Roman people was dispelled by an act of opportune liberality. Tiberius now stepped forward in the name of his adopted son to bestow on the citizens a largess of three hundred sesterces a-piece, and they hailed with acclamations the announcement that the senate, at his desire, had chosen their favourite for the consulship of the ensuing year. It was considered as a special mark of honour that the emperor deigned to accept the same office in conjunction with him. But ere the period for his assuming it had arrived, a new duty had been found for him to discharge. The affairs of the East required to be set in order. The demise of Archelaus, the king of Cappadocia, who had lately died at Rome of distress and apprehension, under a charge preferred against him in the senate, had offered an opportunity for annexing that country to the empire, and its ample revenues had enabled Tiberius to re-

Mission of Germanicus to the East.

duce by one-half the tax of a hundredth on sales.<sup>1</sup> The organization of this new acquisition remained to be completed. At the same time the people of Commagene, and the still autonomous districts of Cilicia, were said to desire, on the recent death of their native princes, to be subjected to the direct dominion of the Romans, while the provincials of Judea and Syria, on their part, were exclaiming against the weight of the imperial burdens, and entreating to be partially relieved from them.<sup>2</sup> Nor was the peace which had reigned between Rome and Parthia since the interview of their chiefs on the Euphrates secure and satisfactory. After more than one court-revolution, Vonones, a son of the great Phraates, whom Augustus had retained as a hostage, perhaps at his father's desire, and had bred in Roman manners, had been called to the throne by the voice of his countrymen, and placed there with the consent of the imperial government. But his subjects soon manifested disgust at the foreign habits of their new ruler, and ventured to discard him. He took refuge, it appears, not among his old friends the Romans, but in the kindred land of Armenia, which not only offered him an asylum, but, in the actual vacancy of its own throne, accepted him precipitately as its sovereign. Hereupon Artabanus, chief of the neighbouring kingdom of Media, but himself of the royal race of the Arsacidæ, whom the Parthians had invited to rule over them, required the Armenians to surrender the fugitive: but Silanus, the proconsul of Syria, was instructed to anticipate this result, and had succeeded in getting possession of his person by artifice, to be kept in custody within the Roman frontiers, and employed on some future occasion. The Parthians were indignant at the loss

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 42.: "Fructibus ejus levare posse centesimæ vectigal prolessus, ducentiesimam in posterum statuit." But Cappadocia was proverbially a poor country: "Mancipiis locuples eget æris Cappadocum rex:" perhaps some treasures were found accumulated in the royal strongholds.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Provinciæ Syria atque Judæa, fessæ oneribus, deminutionem tributi orabant." For the annexation of Judea on the banishment of Archelaus, see above, chap. ~~xxviii.~~ XLVI.

of their victim, the Armenians mortified at the insult to the object of their choice; but Silanus was directed to amuse and negotiate with both powers, and avoid an open rupture by all the arts of diplomacy.<sup>1</sup> Tiberius might hope that the mission of a chief of higher name and authority, attended by an imposing force, and surrounded with the pomp of imperial dignity, would awe, as on former occasions, the murmurs of his rivals into silence. Resolved not himself to abandon the helm of government, and deeming his own son Drusus too inexperienced for the arduous office, he made choice of Germanicus to represent the majesty of the empire in the East. For this purpose he placed him in the same position as Agrippa had held under Augustus, and required the senate to confirm by a decree his appointment to an extraordinary command over the provinces beyond the Hellespont, with full powers for making war or peace, for annexing provinces, enfranchising cities, and modifying their burdens. Tiberius would allow no delay. The young Cæsar was directed to cross the sea the same autumn, and the consulship, which he had been summoned from Germany to hold, he was permitted to retain in Asia.<sup>2</sup>

In the course of the same year Drusus was sent into Illyricum, with directions to watch the movements of the Germans on their southern frontier.<sup>3</sup> Of the two princes Drusus was supposed to be the emperor's favourite, and such, as his own child in blood and the child of his cherished Vipsania, he might naturally be. But the citizens cast themselves on the opposite side, and showered all their affection on Germanicus, whose character was made to shine in popular narratives in contrast with that of his less fortunate cousin. A reason for this preference they discovered in the fact of his higher maternal descent, for Germanicus was the son of an Antonia; while the mother of Drusus was a Vipsania only; and his grandsire, Pomponius

Drusus at the same time sent to Illyricum.

<sup>1</sup> For the affairs of Parthia and Armenia in detail, see Tac. *Ann.* ii. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 44.

Atticus, the friend of Cicero, was a simple knight.<sup>1</sup> But the cousins, or brothers as they were legally styled, were unconscious of these jealousies, or at least unaffected by them. Whatever dissimilarity there might be in their tempers, they lived in perfect amity. Tiberius was anxious that Drusus should emulate the elder prince in the career of public toils and honours. He was glad to remove him from the dissipations of the capital; he was desirous also of completing his military training; it was surmised by some that he felt more secure in his own elevation above the laws when each of his children stood at the head of one of the chief armies of the republic. But the state of affairs on the Danubian frontier undoubtedly required the presence of a commander on whose loyalty and zeal the emperor could fully rely, and the mission both of Germanicus and Drusus seems to have been dictated by a legitimate policy.

The withdrawal of the Roman forces from the soil of Germany had restored peace to its northern districts; but no sooner were Arminius and his Cherusicans relieved from their annual aggressions, than they turned their arms on their own brethren, the Suevi in the south. The kingdom of Maroboduus, which he professed to rule after the fashion he had learnt in the city of the universal conquerors, gave umbrage to the national spirit of the yet untamed barbarians. Even among his own subjects there were many who viewed his innovations with disgust. On the first onset of the Cherusci, the Semnones and Langobardi, who were numbered among the Suevic tribes, went over to them; and this defection was but partially balanced by the caprice of Inguiomerus, the bravest of the northern patriots, who, with a band of clients and retainers, attached himself to the service of Maroboduus. Nor indeed had the Cherusci been so long confronted with the Roman legions without acquiring some knowledge of their tactics. When the two native armies met in the field they were found to be armed and marshalled alike, after the fash-

War between  
the Maro-  
manni and the  
Cherusci.

A. D. 17-19.  
A. U. 770-772.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 43.



ion of the masters of the art of war. Each of the rivals could vaunt that they had learnt to baffle the terrible Romans with their own weapons: the Cherusci could point to the spoils they had wrested from Varus; the Marcomanni boasted that they had kept Tiberius himself at bay and sent him back unlaurelled across the Danube. The battle which now ensued between them resulted in the defeat of Maroboduus; and upon this, many of the tribes he had enlisted under his standards passed over to the other side: when he could no longer make head against the triumphant Arminius, he prostrated himself before the emperor and implored his succour. Tiberius replied that he had no right to look for assistance from the power from which he had himself withheld aid in its contest with the Cherusci: nevertheless the Romans were magnanimous as well as powerful, and would not refuse to interfere to save their new client from destruction. It was under these circumstances that Drusus was dispatched to the Danube, with directions ostensibly to negotiate terms for Maroboduus: but he received, it would seem, more private instructions, to raise fresh enemies against him, and secretly effect his ruin from another quarter.<sup>1</sup> Shielded from the violence of Arminius, the king of the Marcomanni was overthrown by the intrigues of Catualda, a chief of the Gothones, who had suffered some injury at his hands. Driven across the Danube, he addressed a letter to Tiberius, in which he solicited an asylum in the Roman territories, and his request was coldly granted. Retained in honourable confinement at Ravenna, he was constantly amused with the hope of being restored to power by the Roman armies: but the expected moment never came, and after lingering in suspense and disappointment through a period of eighteen years, he died at last an object of scarcely merited contempt to the few who yet remembered that he had been a king and the founder of a kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

Maroboduus  
seeks shelter  
within the Ro-  
man domin-  
ions.

The success of the artifices of Tiberius against German

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 44-46.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 63.

liberty was further exemplified in the offer he is said to have received at this period from a chief of the Chatti, to effect the removal of Arminius privily. The barbarian demanded to be furnished with some subtle poison, such as the Romans were but too skilful in preparing. This nefarious proposal was recited to the senators by the emperor's command, that they might hear his generous reply to it. Their fathers, he reminded them, had forbidden the employment of poison against Pyrrhus, for the Romans were wont to avenge themselves on their enemies, not by secret machinations, but openly and with arms.<sup>1</sup> But the empire, in fact, had no more now to fear from the influence of its ancient antagonist; for Arminius, the bulwark of German independence, degenerated in the hour of his triumph from the virtues of a patriot chief, and himself affected the tyranny over his countrymen which he had baffled in Germanicus, and rebuked in Maroboduus. His people retorted upon him the lessons of freedom with which he had inspired them, and after a struggle of some length and many vicissitudes, he was slain by domestic treachery. The liberator of Germany had achieved victory over the Romans, not in their youth and weakness, like Pontius or Porsena, but at the period of their highest power and most varied resources. His life was extended through thirty-seven years only, during twelve of which he had enjoyed the chief place among his countrymen: his name, though its reputation was clouded at its close, continued long to be chanted in their households as the watchword of liberty and glory: but to the Greeks, whose view was limited to the world of Hellas, the fame of the German hero remained unknown; and even the Romans disregarded it in comparison with more ancient celebrities, till Tacitus rescued it from obscurity, and poured on it the full flood of his immortal eloquence.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 88. See, for the generosity of Fabricius, Plutarch in *Pyrrh.* 12.; Cic. *de Off.* iii. 22.; Val. Max. vi. 5. 1. and other writers.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. c. If the twelve years of his authority are counted from the defeat of Varus (762), his death would take place in 774. Tacitus does

The operations which occurred at the same period on the southern frontier of the empire were of little political importance. While the African provinces were numbered among the most opulent of the Roman possessions, they were, from the character of the country, generally exempt from the barbarian warfare by which so many other districts were harassed or alarmed. The skirts of the long chain of the Atlas, indeed, always harboured tribes of unsubdued and predatory barbarians; but the strength of the African hordes was so feeble, their means and resources so limited, that their warfare was rather that of a banditti than of hostile nations. Only when marshalled by a chief of Roman origin or training could they become formidable either from their skill in war or their powers of combination. Thus in the wars of the first Cæsar, a knight named Sittius had placed himself at the head of a disciplined force, with which he had seemed for a moment to hold the balance between the contending factions of Rome itself. We now read of the exploits of a native warrior named Tacfarinas, who turned the science he had acquired in the Roman camp, as a captain of Numidian auxiliaries, into an instrument of arrogance and insult to the majesty of the empire.<sup>1</sup> Having deserted the service of the proconsul, he had gathered round him the bands of roving robbers who infested the mountains, and had divided them into troops and companies. Accepted as their chief by a tribe called the Musulani, he had associated with them the Moorish warriors on their borders, who owned the sway of a leader named Mazippa: while the one body, armed and trained after the manner of the legions, formed the main strength of these confederate forces, the other, following the fashion of the country, skirmished actively on its flanks, and carried fire and sword within sight of the Roman cantonments. Disaffection was spreading among the subject nations of the province itself,

not mark the date very distinctly. Dion only once mentions the name of Arminius, in connexion with Varus, and never alludes to him again.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 52.

when the proconsul *Furius Camillus* advanced with the forces under his command to repress it by a decisive blow. The defence of the peaceful province had been entrusted to a single legion with its auxiliary cohorts, and this little army well handled was sufficient to overcome all resistance in the field. *Tacfarinas*, confident in the tactics he had learnt from his late masters, ventured to give battle, and suffered a speedy defeat. The proconsul claimed the honours of a conqueror; and *Tiberius*, it was surmised, was the more willing to grant them on account of the obscurity of his name, which, high as it once stood in the fasti of the republic, had been illustrated by no distinctions since the almost forgotten days of the Gaulish invasion.<sup>1</sup> *Camillus* himself had had no previous experience in arms; nor was he now elated with success, or tempted, as the chastiser of a horde of savages, to believe himself a mighty general. He was not indeed aware of the fact, soon proved by the event, that his success was illusory and indecisive.

*Germanicus*, after passing but a few months in Rome, had departed by *Ancona* and the *Dalmatian* coast, where he had had an interview with *Drusus*, to assume his ample powers in the East. By the first day of the new year, the commencement of his consulship, he had arrived at *Nicopolis*, the city founded by *Augustus* on the shores of the *Ambracian Gulf*. The descendant in blood of *Antonius*, and in law of *Octavius*, might behold with mingled feelings the scene of a battle so fortunate, and at the same time so fatal, to his race.<sup>2</sup> From thence he shaped his course through *Athens*, where he recommended himself to the citizens by his studied moderation, in dismissing all his lictors but one; and received in return the highest compliments the *Athenians* could confer, which con-

*Tiberius III.,  
Germanicus  
II., consul.*

A. D. 18  
A. U. 771.

<sup>1</sup> *Tac. l. c.*: "Nam post recipitorem Urbis, filiumque ejus *Camillum*, penes alias familias imperatoria laus fuerat."

<sup>2</sup> *Tac. Ann. ii. 53.*: "Sacratis ab *Augusto* manubias (the beaks suspended in the temple of *Apollo*) castraque *Antonii*, cum recordatione majorum suorum adiit."

sisted, it would seem, in a studied panegyric on their own greatness.<sup>1</sup> From Athens he crossed to Eubœa, and thence to Lesbos, in the usual track of the Roman proconsul. From Lesbos, however, he took a wider sweep, visiting the Propontis and the cities on both its shores, and entering the Euxine Sea, partly to gratify his interest in scenes of historic celebrity, partly to console and encourage by his presence the places which had suffered most severely from the vicissitudes of war and the oppression of unjust rulers.<sup>2</sup> Only the year before no less than twelve cities of the interior had been overthrown or damaged by a destructive earthquake: but steps had been already taken through a special commission of inquiry, and by the prompt remission of several years' tribute, to repair the effects of this extraordinary visitation.<sup>3</sup> Germanicus does not seem to have made it part of his business to visit the sufferers. His travels were prompted perhaps chiefly by curiosity of a character more or less enlightened. Thus, for instance, he steered for the coast of Samothracia, in order to be admitted to the mysterious rites of the Cabiric priesthood, but could not reach it from adverse winds. He landed, however, on the shore of Ilium, again skirted the coast of Asia, and consulted the oracle of Apollo at Claros, where the priest who revealed the answer of the divinity is said to have given him an intimation of the early death which awaited him.

The interests which Germanicus thus appears to have indulged were scarcely worthy, perhaps, of the prince to whom public affairs of so much importance were entrusted, at a moment when every step he took was watched, as he must have known, with jealous scrutiny, not only by the emperor, but by at least one

Piso Cnæus  
Calpurnius ap-  
pointed procon-  
sul of Syria.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Excepere Græci quæsitissimis honoribus, vetera suorum facta dictaque præferentes, quo plus dignationis adulatio haberet."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 47.: "Eodem anno (770) duodecim celebres Asiæ urbes conlapsæ nocturno motu terræ . . . mittique ex Senatu placuit qui præsentia spectaret refoveretque." A prætorian senator was sent to obviate any jealousy

powerful rival among the nobles.<sup>1</sup> It is possible, indeed, that the innocent character of a traveller and a sightseer was purposely adopted to disarm suspicion: but in fact a wiser man than the young Cæsar would have felt that he was more concerned to guard by vigorous and decisive movements against the intrigues of a fallow-subject than the distrust of their ruler. On appointing Germanicus to the command in the Eastern provinces, Tiberius had taken the precaution, so his conduct was interpreted, of removing from the government of Syria the prince's friend and adherent Silanus, and placing there a man whose pride and personal pretensions might be used as an instrument for controlling his ambition.<sup>2</sup> Cnæus Piso, on whom this appointment was conferred, was a member of the Calpurnian gens, which claimed as high an antiquity as any of the oldest families of Rome, and at least in the last century of the republic, had repeatedly filled the highest magistracies. The surname of Piso was common to more than one branch of this noble house, and the prænomen Cnæus had descended to the personage now before

Pride of the Calpurnian gens, and antagonism to the Cæsarean family.

on the part of the consular governor of the province. It is just possible that this might be the reason why Germanicus omitted to visit the injured cities.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus notices the antiquarian spirit of the Greeks rather contemptuously. *Hist.* ii. 4: "Spectata opulentia domisque regum, quæque alia lætum antiquitatibus Græcorum genus incertæ vetustati affigit." But the Roman nobles showed their Hellenic culture by affecting a similar taste; thus Cæsar, the Cæsar at least of Lucan, spent a day in visiting the plain of Troy, under the guidance of a native cicerone: "Herceas, *monstrator* ait, non respicis aras?" *Phars.* ix. 979. Comp. viii. 851: "Nam quis ad exustam Cancro torrente Syænen Idit, et imbrifera siccas sub Pleiade Thebas, Spectator Nili?" and the whole spirit of the description of the Nile in the tenth book. See also the address to Celer in Statius, *Sylv.* ii. 2. 197.:

"Te præside noscat

Unde paludosi fecunda licentia Nili . . .

Duc et ad Æmæthios Manes ubi belliger urbis

Conditor Hyblæe perfusus nectare durat . . ."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 43. The daughter of Silanus was betrothed to Nero, the eldest son of Germanicus, then a mere child. The marriage seems never to have taken place.

us from a father who had fought through the wars of Cæsar and Pompeius, had shared the disasters of Cassius and Brutus, and though pardoned by Octavius, had disdained to solicit employment under the new institutions.<sup>1</sup> Only when spontaneously offered him by the emperor had he deigned to accept the consulship. Cnæus Piso, the son, was reputed a proud man among the proudest of circles, the magnates of the expiring free state and the rising empire; a class whose intense self-assertion was inflamed by family names, family rites, family images and ensigns. The decline of their numbers after the slaughter of the Sullan wars had imparted still greater concentration to this feeling; and claiming complete equality among themselves, they hesitated to acknowledge a superior even in the emperor himself. To an Æmilius or a Calpurnius, a Lepidus or a Piso, the son of an Octavius was still no more than a plebeian imperator, raised to power by a turbulent commonalty; a breath, they felt, had made him, and a breath, they fondly believed, might yet overthrow him. Whether as an emperor or a private senator, whatever might be his actual powers, his pretensions to legitimate right they haughtily despised and repudiated. They had marked, no doubt with peculiar jealousy, the alliance of the plebeian Octavius with one of their own houses, the Claudian, the nobility of which it was impossible to gainsay: but this served only to convert their disdain into jealousy, and impel them to a state of antagonism or rivalry, from which they had before held contemptuously aloof. When once invited to compare themselves with their ruler, it was easy to persuade them that each had individually a claim to empire, to the full as good as the man whom fortune had placed in the ascendant. Piso deemed himself the natural equal of Tiberius, or if he had any misgivings of his own, his consort

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* l. c.; Comp. Smith's *Dict. of Class. Biography*, art. Piso, nos. 22, 23. There were also two Cnæus Pisos before the last-mentioned, one quaestor to Pompeius in the Piratic War, the other the associate of Catilina, murdered in Spain. It is not clear from which of these the Pisos in the text descended.

Plancina, the daughter of Munatius Plancus, the chief who for a moment had trimmed the scales between the armed factions of the republic, was of a temper to dispel or overrule them. This imperious woman had formed, moreover, an intimacy with the empress-mother, Plancina, wife of Piso, a favourite of Livia. in whose plans for prolonging the tutelage of Tiberius she had probably borne a part. She had learnt to despise the son in the cabinet of the mother. Still more did the vainglorious pair look scornfully on the children of the man for whom they had so little respect himself. Piso believed that he was appointed to the government of Syria in order to check the ambitious designs which it was so easy to impute to Germanicus; and Plancina may have been instructed by Livia to play the rival to Agrippina; for the people at least, were easily persuaded that the imperial house was already a prey to domestic jealousies. Conscious of their own preference for Germanicus, they were not less convinced of the partiality of Tiberius for Drusus, and they were persuaded that the fertility of Agrippina, the consort of the one, must be a source of mortification and dislike, when contrasted with the barrenness of Livilla, the wife of the other.<sup>1</sup>

The mission which Piso seems to have considered as covertly confided to him, that of thwarting his superior, and bringing his authority into contempt, he began Conduct of Piso in Syria. to discharge with zeal, and even precipitate vehemence, from the moment he quitted Italy. Following Germanicus to Athens, he pretended to reflect on his unseemly derogation from the majesty of the ruling people, in paying his tribute of courteous admiration to the monuments of the

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. ii. 48. The name Livilla, the diminutive of Livia, was used frequently to distinguish the wife of Drusus from the empress-mother. Livilla was a daughter of the elder Drusus, and sister of Germanicus, married first to Caius Caesar in very early youth, and, on his decease, to the son of Tiberius, her cousin. She may have had one daughter Julia, afterwards united to Nero Drusus and Rabellius Blandus, in the first ten years of her second marriage; but it was not till 772 that she bore a son, one of twins, named Tiberius Gemellus. See Ann. ii. 84.



city of Minerva. The prince, though not uninformed of this insolent behaviour, nevertheless treated his subordinate with marked kindness: on one occasion he even saved his life, by sending him assistance when in danger from a storm at sea, and when his death, if he had been overwhelmed in the waters, might have been fairly ascribed to accident. From Rhodes, where they met for the first time, Piso proceeded direct to the eastern provinces, while his chief still lingered on his route: and on reaching Syria and the quarters of the legions, began without delay a course of conduct which seems to point, not so much to a studied hostility to Germanicus, as to a rash and crude design of seizing supreme power for himself. Not only did he adopt every method of corruption, to make himself a party among the officers and soldiers; he went so far as to dismiss both centurions and tribunes of his own authority, and to remodel the command of the troops to suit his own purposes.<sup>1</sup> The men, debauched already by the general relaxation of discipline, seem to have been easily won over; and even the provincials, unconscious, it would appear, of the true duties of a Roman emperor, applauded his indecent indulgence, and entitled him the *Father of the Legions*.<sup>2</sup> In these artifices he was warmly seconded by Plancina, who courted the soldiers by appearing at their re-

<sup>1</sup> The exact position of Piso towards Germanicus, which seems to have allowed him considerable, but ill-defined authority, is marked by the term *adjutor* applied to him by Tiberius at a later period, *Ann.* iii. 12. It will be remembered that when the young Caius Cæsar was sent by his grandfather Augustus to compose the affairs of the East, a *rector* was provided him, to advise or even, inexperienced as he was, to direct his public measures. His first *rector* was Quirinius (*Ann.* iii. 48.), who, as A. Zumpt has shown in his *Comment Epigraph.* ii., was probably proconsul of Syria at the time of his arrival. The appointment of Piso seems to have been meant as an imitation of the policy of Augustus. In the proconsul of Syria Germanicus received not a *rector*, but, as an older man, an *adjutor* only, whose duties were less clearly defined; there is no reason to suppose that Tiberius had any sinister view in giving him this honorary assistant.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 55.: "Ut sermone vulgi Parens Legionum haberetur." It is not clear perhaps whether the writer means by *vulgus* the generality of the provincials, or the rank and file of the army itself.

views and exercises, a practice which the Romans pronounced unfeminine; and the rumour was industriously spread that the conduct of her husband, and her own constant abuse of Germanicus and Agrippina, were not displeasing to the emperor himself.

Strange indeed it must appear, if these proceedings have been truly reported, and if, as we are assured, he was fully acquainted with them, that Germanicus should have postponed their repression to any other object of his mission whatever. Such conduct could have no other result, whatever the feeling

*Germanicus leaves it unnoticed, and devotes himself to affairs.*

which originally prompted it, than military insubordination, and discord in camp and council; and it is difficult to conceive that the vicegerent of the emperor could have any other duty so urgent as that of crushing the first germs of civil commotion. Germanicus, however, was advised otherwise. The settlement of the relations of the empire with Armenia was the direct object of his mission, and to this he calmly devoted his whole attention. In order to give full weight to the terms he was instructed to impose, he marched in person within the Armenian frontiers at the head of his forces. Instead, however, of restoring the fugitive Vonones, still retained in custody in Syria, to the throne from which the jealousy of the Parthians had ejected him, he affected to consult the wishes now expressed by the capricious Armenians themselves, in appointing in his room a son of Polemo, king of Pontus, named Zeno, whose early training in their own customs gave him a nearer claim to their regard. In the royal city of Artaxata,

*He crowns Zeno with the diadem of Armenia.*

and surrounded by many of the native nobility, the Roman Cæsar placed the diadem on his destined vassal's head, saluting him in the name of his new subjects with the title of Artaxias, signifying greatness or sovereignty. To the envoys of Artabanus, who professed an ardent wish to cultivate the friendship of Rome, and begged for their chief the honour of an interview on the Euphrates, he replied with the dignity which befitted his position, and the modesty, at

the same time, which was peculiar to himself. He assented, moreover, to the request of the Parthians that he would at least remove Vonones further from the frontier, and assigned him a residence at Pompeiopolis, on the Cilician coast. Vonones, it seems, had been making interest with Piso and Plancina, and built on their influence his hopes of returning in triumph to Armenia or even to Parthia. It was surmised that the ease with which Germanicus yielded on this point to the desires of Artabanus was partly owing to the hostile relations subsisting between himself and the Syrian proconsul. Piso had offended him, as an emperor, beyond forgiveness in disobeying his commands respecting the movement of troops, and the meeting between them, which took place at their winter quarters at Cyrrhus, had been marked by coldness on the one side, and defiance hardly disguised on the other. Piso had taken on himself to check the customary adulation of an eastern prince, who had offered Germanicus a crown of gold, of much greater weight than that he tendered to his subordinate, rejecting the present to himself with pretended indignation, and exclaiming that the compliments addressed to his superior befit the son, not of a Roman prince, but of a Parthian tyrant.<sup>1</sup>

The formal reduction of Commagene and Cappadocia to the condition of provinces, completed the work of the year.

Germanicus  
visits Egypt.

A. D. 19.  
A. U. 772.

In the following winter Germanicus made a tour in Egypt, with the professed object of examining the state of that province; but his ardour in the study of antiquities was, it would appear, a more urgent motive for his journey.<sup>2</sup> His behaviour to the natives there was as usual studiously moderate and courteous: he not only appeared among them unattended by soldiers, and in the peaceful garb of a Greek philosopher, as Scipio had visited Sicily in the heat of the Punic war, but opened the

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 56-58.

<sup>2</sup> The motive which Suetonius alleges, to take measures for the relief of an impending scarcity, is not mentioned by Tacitus, and seems at least superfluous. Suet. *Tib.* 52.; Tac. *Ann.* ii. 59.

granaries for the cheaper and more abundant supply of grain. Tiberius is said to have addressed him with a gentle reproof for a condescension which was deemed unworthy of his station; but the affairs of Egypt lay beyond the sphere of his mission, and he was rebuked more pointedly for disregarding the rule established by Augustus, that no senator nor even a knight should enter Egypt at all, except with the emperor's special permission. While, however, these unfavourable remarks were yet unknown to Germanicus, he continued his progress, ascending the Nile from Canopus, visiting the Pyramids and temples on its banks, and listening with awe and wonder to the mysterious music which *breathed from the face of Memnon*.<sup>1</sup> He consulted, moreover, the oracle of the bull Apis, and received, it was said, an ominous response.<sup>2</sup> Nor did he retrace his steps till he had reached Elephantine and Syene, the furthest limits of the empire.<sup>3</sup> The real objects of his mission to the East had been already accomplished, and he might amuse his leisure with contemplating the wonders of the land of mystery and fable; but the notice which now reached him of the emperor's displeasure, hastened perhaps his departure from it. The senate indeed, while it listened with silent deference to the murmurs of Tiberius, concurred in voting an ovation to his nephew for his settlement of the affairs of Armenia, and an ovation also to his son for the capture of Maroboduus. The two princes were invited to enter the city in solemn procession together.<sup>4</sup> But Ger-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* viii. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. ii. 61.: "Elephantinen ac Syenen, claustra olim Romani imperii; quod nunc (in the time of Trajan) rubrum ad mare patescit;" meaning perhaps the Indian Ocean. Syene, the modern Assuan, was supposed to lie under the Tropic of Cancer, a fact which the ancients established from the direct rays of the sun being visible there, as they affirmed, at the summer solstice at the bottom of a well. This phenomenon, however, might be observed at any spot within a quarter of a degree of the actual circle. Mannert. x. i. 322.; Maltebrum, *Geogr.* i. 9. Its exact latitude, indeed, is 24° 5' N., while the tropical circle is 23° 28', a difference of 37'. It is said, however, that the inclination of the shadows is still not perceptible to the eye there.

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 64.

Germanicus re- manicus now shaped his course from Egypt to  
turns to Syria. Syria, where he found that his regulations and  
appointments had been audaciously overruled by Piso. The  
warmth to which he was at last excited by this insolence  
seems to have determined the offender to quit the province  
of his own accord. Piso had already made preparations for  
relinquishing his post, when the feeble state of health into  
which the Cæsar now fell induced him to defer his departure.  
Presently, however, the young prince seemed to revive, and  
the provincials vied with one another in courtly demonstra-  
tions, at which Piso was so mortified as to break out into  
actual violence against the astonished populace of Antioch.  
Retiring, however, no further than Seleucia, he there pro-  
posed to await the event of his chief's sickness, which had

His sickness  
imputed to poi-  
son adminis-  
tered by Piso.

again returned; while the attendants of German-  
icus murmured their suspicions that he had ad-  
ministered poison to their patron. They pre-  
tended, moreover, that he had assailed his life with magical  
incantations, in proof of which they produced charms and  
amulets, with the remains of human bones, hidden under the  
floor of his apartment, and the name of Germanicus inscribed  
on leaden tablets buried amongst these implements of witch-  
craft. The Romans were fully persuaded of the pretended  
powers of sorcery, and they had ample experience perhaps  
of the actual effects of poison: yet it hardly occurred to  
them that the use of the one must be superfluous as an ad-  
junct to the other. We may be allowed to think that in  
producing this secondary proof of Piso's criminality, they  
have weakened the credibility of the primary accusation.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the messengers whom Piso sent to inquire  
after the prince's health were naturally regarded as spies, if  
not as assassins. Germanicus, it seems, was him-  
self fully impressed with the idea that he was  
the victim of treachery, and he dictated from his  
bed a letter to the culprit, in which he formally

Death of Ger-  
manicus.

A. D. 19.  
A. U. 772.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 69.; Dion, lvi. 18.

renounced his insidious pretensions to friendship.<sup>1</sup> At the same time he commanded him to surrender the ensigns of authority, and, as some related, to quit the province, fearing to expose to his implacable hatred, on his own anticipated demise, the lives and fortunes of his defenceless family.<sup>2</sup> Whether commanded or only admonished, Piso sullenly submitted. He put himself on board a vessel, and sailed westward: nevertheless he continued to linger on his route, awaiting the moment of the prince's dissolution to return, and boldly seize again the proconsular power in Syria. Germanicus grew rapidly worse. With his failing breath he called his friends into his presence, and adjured them to prosecute Piso and Plancina as the real authors of his death, and charge the senate to avenge his murder with a stern and righteous judgment. Many brave and noble spirits were assembled round his bed, devoted to the republic and the Cæsarean family, and this appeal to their affection was not made in vain. They promised to hold his last wishes sacred; nor did they fail in their promise.<sup>3</sup> Finally the dying man turned to his faithful Agrippina, whose heart was ready to break with grief and rage, and implored her to moderate her transports, to check the fury of her indignation, and for the sake of their children, so dear to both, abstain from any show of pride which might give offence to personages more powerful, as he said, than herself. This covert allusion was supposed to point at Tiberius himself; and the rumour was eagerly embraced by a licentious populace, that their favourite with his last breath had warned his relict to beware the malice of her natural guardian.<sup>4</sup>

The character of Germanicus, as I have already intimated, is represented as one of the most interesting of Roman history. It is embellished by the warmest and most graceful touches of the greatest master of pathos among Roman writers, and invested

Reflections upon his character.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. ii. 70.: "Componit epistolas, quæ amicitiam ei renuntiabat."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Addunt plerique, jussum provincia decedere."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. Ann. ii. 71.

<sup>4</sup> Tac. Ann. ii. 72.

with a gleam of mournful splendour by the laments and acclamations of the populace to whom he was endeared. It is the more difficult to form a just estimate of it, from the impossibility of distinguishing, in the pages of Tacitus, the genuine statements of history from the gloss put upon them by a sentimental admirer. On the whole, the impression we may most justly receive is, that Germanicus was a man of warm and generous temper, but too soft; perhaps, and flexible in disposition ever to have become a patriot or a hero. His condescension to the susceptibilities of the Athenians and Alexandrians was rather puerile than statesmanlike. It is a childish affectation in a ruler to pretend to be an equal. The hard and self-controlling Tiberius was right in reproving it. The emperor, the real man of the world, trained in action and suffering, knew better the painful requirements of the imperial station. Nor, again, was the taste the young prince exhibited for mere curiosities, and the excitement of sight-seeing, quite worthy of his deep responsibilities. His proceedings, indeed, are described by Tacitus in the spirit of a dilettante, and some portion at least of the frivolity which seems to attach to them may be laid perhaps to the charge of the author rather than of the actor himself. Such, nevertheless, under the circumstances of the times, was not the stuff of which the ruler of a hundred millions of men could auspiciously be made. We shall meet, as we proceed, with similar examples of well-disposed youths born in the Roman purple, displaying in early life almost feminine graces of character, but degenerating under the trials and burdens of maturer years into timid and selfish tyrants. But it is futile perhaps and presumptuous to draw conclusions from such slight and shadowy data as we possess: the remains of Germanicus have been embalmed in some of the most eloquent pages of history, and it seems a kind of desecration to turn him in his tomb.

The decease of the illustrious Cæsar drew tears from the provincials, and even from the people of the neighbouring countries, while allies and tributaries felt that they had lost

in him a generous friend and protector. Solemnized a distance from the home of his race, his funeral was not adorned with the images of his ancestors, which occupied their niches along the walls of the paternal mansion: but the place and circumstances of his death, cut off as he was by premature disease far from his native soil, on the spot which his virtues and genius had made his own, throw some colour of excuse over the fond idea of a resemblance between him and the great Alexander.<sup>1</sup> The character of the renowned Macedonian conqueror was indeed the type to which the Romans were constantly turning. Pompeius had emulated it; even Crassus had aspired to it; the flatterers of Octavius had confidently ascribed it to their patron. The claims of Germanicus to such a comparison were slight indeed: the only points of similitude that could be pleaded for him were his youth and generosity, the first an universal, the second a common attribute of early manhood: yet such is the charm of these qualities that they gained him more perhaps of his countrymen's admiration than if he had conquered a Mithridates, or avenged the defeat of Carrhæ. His body was consumed in the forum at Antioch, after being exposed to public view naked. Such as were already preoccupied with the conviction of his assassination are said to have traced on it indubitable marks of poison; while less prejudiced observers, it was admitted, perceived no indications to justify the suspicion. The friends of Germanicus, however, were intent on bringing the supposed culprits to justice. They seized a woman named Martina, a creature of Plancina, and one already obnoxious in popular estimation to the charge of a professed poisoner, and sent her to undergo examination at Rome, while they concocted their formal accusations against both Piso and his wife. The lieutenants of the deceased prince, and as many senators as were present, took on themselves, in the absence of any regular authority,

Germanicus  
fondly com-  
pared to Alex-  
ander the  
Great.

Suspicious of  
poison.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. ii. 73.



to choose a proconsul for Syria, in anticipation of the legitimate appointment of the emperor. It was important for their views against the late proconsul to occupy the place he had so reluctantly vacated, and shut the doors of the province against his unauthorized return. The imperium was devolved, after some discussion among them and the competition of more than one candidate, upon Cnæus Sentius.<sup>1</sup> Agrippina herself made no longer stay in Syria, but embarked with her children, and, bearing the ashes of her husband, directed her course for Rome.<sup>2</sup>

Piso meanwhile awaited the long-expected assurance of his enemy's demise at the island of Coa. His triumph was insolently avowed. He did not hesitate to offer vows and sacrifices on the occasion; and his wife, it was remarked, chose that moment for putting off the garb of mourning which she had recently adopted for the death of a sister.<sup>3</sup> Nor were there wanting among the adherents of the disgraced proconsul advisers who counselled him to return without delay to Syria, and claim the province as his own. His dismissal, if such it really was, had been irregular; it had been unauthorized either by the emperor or the senate; the substitution of a successor might be represented as violent and indecent. His son Marcus, however, would have dissuaded him from so daring an act, so near akin to treason and rebellion, and recommended rather his continuing on his course to Rome, and seeking at the emperor's hands restitution of the government of which he had been, as was alleged, so arbitrarily deprived.<sup>4</sup> The bolder advice prevailed. The more Tiberius actually rejoiced in the death of the prince he so deeply distrusted, the more, it was argued, would he, for appearance sake, steel himself against the appeal of that prince's acknowledged enemy. At the same time the pride of Piso revolted against the indignity of kneeling even to the noblest of the Romans. If terms were to be made, he would make them sword in hand. Without abso-

Indecent exultation of Piso.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 74.

Tac. *Ann.* ii. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 76.

lutely contemplating an armed insurrection against the imperial authority, he still rashly fancied that his position would be more secure and independent at the head of the Syrian legions, than as a solitary suppliant at the door of the palace. He addressed a letter to the emperor, setting forth his complaints against Germanicus, and representing his claims to the government of which he had been abruptly deprived. Then summoning to him his guards and centurions, he retraced his steps towards Antioch. Landing on the coast, he intercepted some detachments which were marching into Syria, while at the same time he required the petty chiefs of Cilicia to furnish him with their stipendiary forces.<sup>1</sup> The Mediterranean itself was not wide enough to allow the foes of Agrippina to pass her without meeting.<sup>2</sup> An altercation ensued between them, which nearly led to a desperate encounter; but when Vibius Marcus, who conducted the widow homeward, cited the assassin, as he freely styled him, to purge himself at Rome, Piso abstained from a hostile defiance, and replied that he would not fail to appear at the legitimate summons of the prætor. At the outset of his daring enterprise his courage seems to have already failed him. His forces, indeed, were altogether inadequate to the service for which he had designed them, and his only hope must have lain in the cowardice or want of faith of the chiefs opposed to him. But Sentius stood his ground firmly. He repelled Domitius, the officer whom Piso had sent before him to secure a footing in Syria; and, when Piso himself took refuge in the fortress of Geleris in Cilicia, advanced with the forces of the province

He claims the government of Syria.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 78. Cilicia Aspera, as has been shown by Zumpt (*Comm. Epigr.* ii.), was annexed to the province of Syria after its separation by Augustus from Cyprus, which was surrendered to the senate. Hence we infer that Quirinius, who gained the triumphal ornaments for his victories over the Homonadenses, a Cilician tribe, was actually governor of Syria. Tac. *Ann.* iii. 48. Accordingly the bold act of Piso in arming the militia of this district was not an invasion of another governor's authority, but only the assertion of what he pretended to be rightfully his own.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 79.

against him, and sat down resolutely to reduce it. In vain did Piso try all the arts of persuasion and corruption on both the men and their leaders. Baffled and reduced to despair he sued for leave to remain unmolested in the place, on surrendering his arms, till the question of the Syrian government should be decided by the emperor. His conditions were rejected, and no other indulgence was accorded him than leave to quit his place of refuge, and take ship direct for Rome.<sup>1</sup>

Thus defeated in an enterprise so questionable in its character, Piso must have felt his position, whether as a suppliant for the prince's favour or a claimant for his justice,

Sympathy of  
the Romans for  
Germanicus.

far more insecure than it had been before he rashly turned back from Cos. The temper of the citizens was inflamed violently against him. In their breasts, at least, there was no doubt of his guilt; and the freedom with which, in the bitterness of their sorrow, they coupled the names of Tiberius and Livia with those of the detested Piso and Plancina was far more likely to irritate the emperor against him, than induce him to throw a shield over his misfortunes. The first news which arrived at Rome of the failing health of Germanicus had excited popular suspicion against his uncle: it was muttered that his reputed patriotism, and the desire ascribed to him to restore the republic, were the cause of the fatal hostility of the head of his house. On a premature announcement of his death the whole city spontaneously assumed all the outward marks of an appointed mourning; and when again fresh arrivals from Syria proclaimed that he was still living, the people passed to the opposite extreme of frantic exultation, till the doors of the temples were burst with the pressure of the crowd of grateful worshippers.<sup>2</sup> But the fatal assurance of his actual decease

Demonstrations of grief  
on his death.

was not long delayed. The usual honours paid to the dead Cæsars were decreed him with more than usual genuineness of feeling. Triumphal arches

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 79-81.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 5.; Tac. *Ann.* ii. 82

were erected to him, not in Rome only, but on the Rhine and among the heights of the Amanus; and it was recorded upon them that he had *died for the republic*.<sup>1</sup> His statues were set up in various cities, and sacrifices made before them; finally his bust was placed in the libraries and public galleries among the masters of Roman eloquence. The exhibition of this feeling was directed personally to the hero: the rest of the imperial house could claim no share in it. When Livilla, the wife of Drusus, herself the sister of the lamented prince, brought forth at this time a twin-birth of sons, and Tiberius proudly boasted that never before had such good fortune befallen a parent so illustrious, the people took no part in his rejoicings, but rather murmured at an event which seemed to add weight and influence to a rival branch of the *Cæsarean family*.<sup>2</sup>

The arrival of Agrippina and her mournful equipage, first at Brundisium, and presently in the city, awoke the sorrows of the people to a louder and if possible a more universal explosion. The funeral honours granted by the emperor were not wanting in decent solemnity. He ordered the magistrates of every district through which it passed to meet and attend it on its way; he directed that tribunes and centurions should bear the urn on their shoulders, and the altars of the *Dii Manes* should smoke with propitiatory sacrifices. Drusus, with the younger brother and children of Germanicus, went forth as far as Tarricina to meet it: the consuls, the senate, and a large concourse of all ranks fell in with the procession as it drew nearer to the city.<sup>3</sup> But one thing seemed still wanting to complete these funeral

Arrival of the  
remains at  
Rome.

A. D. 20.  
A. U. 772.

Funeral hon-  
ours paid them  
by the people.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 83.

Tac. *Ann.* ii. 84. Of these children one was Tiberius Gemellus, whose name will appear again on these pages: the other seems to have died in infancy.

<sup>2</sup> Other extraordinary signs of grief are recorded by Suetonius, l. c. Even foreign princes laid aside their royal ornaments on the day when this solemnity was reported to them; the king of the Parthians abstained from the state exercise of hunting.

honours. The emperor, the chief of the house which had lost so distinguished a member, the chief of the state which mourned so cherished a hero, was himself absent. Even within the city, and after the dear remains had been con-  
 Reserved de-  
 meanour of Ti-  
 berius and  
 Livia. signed to the Cæsarean mausoleum, Tiberius abstained from appearing in public, and letting his people behold him in the same garb of mourning as themselves. Livia also maintained a similar reserve; nor less did Antonia herself, the mother of the deceased. The suspicions already current against Tiberius and the aged empress were confirmed by this unaccountable coldness: it was rumoured that they kept close within the palace lest the people should discover that under the guise of sorrow their eyes were really tearless; and Antonia, it was believed, was forbidden to attract attention to their absence by showing herself to the citizens.<sup>1</sup> These surmises were, perhaps, hardly fair. Tiberius may have had no personal affection for his nephew: he was probably jealous of him, and mortified at his popularity: in the midst of the wailing citizens he, at least, might have been no genuine mourner. Yet it is difficult to suppose that one so long trained in dissimulation would have found it hard to cast a decent cloud over his countenance, and a man so crafty and politic as he is represented, would have affected at least the feeling of the hour, however little he may have really shared it. The fact is, however, that the breast of Tiberius was something very different from a mere calculating machine. He had strong feelings, and even violent prejudices on certain points of conduct. He detested all outward expression of sensibility from temper rather than policy. The lightness and frivolity of the Italian character, enfeebled as it now was by moral and sensual indulgence, its vehement gesticulations, its ready laugh or sigh, its varying smiles and tears, he despised with cynical indignation. Self-sufficing himself, and always self-controlled, he scorned the woe or the pleasure which seeks

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 8.

relief or sympathy from any outward demonstrations. There was, moreover, a dogged obstinacy about him which forbade him in this case to yield to the wishes and expectations of the people, just as on a former occasion he had held out morosely against the reasonable inclinations of Augustus. He was in fact one of those very unamiable men who subject their conduct to harsh interpretations from mere perverseness of temper, and the dislike and distrust they create in the breasts of those around them. In certain positions in life such men are unavoidably thrust into crimes, and into such we shall soon find Tiberius impelled without the power of resistance. But it is probable that at this period at least he was much misconstrued, and the time has not yet come to employ those sable colours in which the brush of his delineator must eventually be dipped.

The injustice, indeed, of the historians generally, and even of a Tacitus or a Suetonius, could touch him no further in his tomb: but it is not too much to say that the injustice of the Romans of his own day went far to confirm the vices, and exasperate the hatred, they so impatiently proclaimed. Such was the inconsistency of his character that Tiberius was keenly alive to the popular opinion which he allowed himself so wantonly to outrage. He had long felt soreness and resentment at the distaste his countrymen had from an early period evinced for him. Mortified at the disappointment of his wish, if not his efforts, to conciliate them, not the less was he piqued at the success of his predecessor in the same course, from whose artifices his own pride revolted. The wound festered in silence and concealment. Conscious of unpopularity himself, he became jealous of every mark of popular favour towards others, and conceived by degrees a deadly fear of the guileless multitude of dupes and drones around him. Speaking of his position in relation to his people, he is said to have used the expression, *I hold a wolf by the ears.*<sup>1</sup> The description was

Tiberius checks  
the flow of popular feeling.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. Tib. 25. : "Ut sæpe lupum se auribus tenere diceret." Duzatus or

a totally false one: it was the excuse of a coward to himself, which he sought presently to justify by acts of spasmodic ferocity; but the populace, meanwhile, unconscious of its master's alarms, and alive only to his infirmities, indulged in the luxury of woe with a levity as frivolous as it proved eventually fatal. Not content with maliciously comparing with this neglect of Tiberius the warm feeling exhibited by Augustus on the death of Drusus, his going forth two hundred miles in the depth of winter to meet the bier, conveying it in person into the forum, and pronouncing the funeral address from the rostra, they lavished all their praises and acclamations on the widow of their favourite, declaring her the true glory of Rome, the only genuine child of their late master, the last surviving specimen of ancient virtue.<sup>1</sup> Their vows for her safety were mingled with passionate adjurations for the health and happiness of her offspring, and their escape from the perils which surrounded them. Tiberius chafed at these ebullitions of ill humour, and was provoked to check them by an edict, in which he gravely declared that many noble Romans had died for the republic, but none had been bewailed with such an outburst of sensibility. It was well, he said, that it should be so, well for himself and for the people; but let some moderation be observed. There was a certain dignity and reserve becoming a prince and an imperial people, which might be disregarded by private persons and petty commonwealths. Enough had been given to sorrow; let them remember the example of the divine Julius on the loss of his only daughter, of the divine Augustus on the death of his grandsons. How often had the Roman people borne with firmness the rout of its legions, the slaughter of its generals, and the overthrow of its noblest families! *Princes are mortal, the state is eternal. Let every one return to his affairs: let every one*, he added,—for the season of the

Terence (*Phorm.* iii. 2. 21.) gives the Greek proverb: τῶν ὅτῶν ἔχω τὸν ἄλκον οὐδ' ἔχειν οὐδ' ἀπειλᾶν δύνῃμαι. Baumgarten Crusius on Suet. l. c.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 4.: "Decus patriæ, solum Augusti sanguinem, unicū antiq̄uitatis specimēn."

Megalesian games was at hand,—*let every one resume his amusements.* And so the great tide of life closed over the remains of Germanicus.<sup>1</sup>

While he was thus sowing the seeds of a long and deep misunderstanding between himself and his people, Tiberius was reflecting, with gloomy misgivings, on the late proceedings of Piso. Though morbidly jealous of any encroachment on the paramount authority he claimed at home and abroad, he was not the less fixed in his resolution not to obtrude it on general notice by a direct vindication. His aim was to throw on the senate the burden of defending the prerogatives it had, as he pretended, spontaneously conferred on him. Accordingly, while he watched the acts of the proconsul, scrutinized his motives, and strove to penetrate his designs, he was not less vigilant in observing the disposition of the nobles, and estimating the support they would tender to himself. Piso's daring attempt to recover a province from which he had been officially dismissed was an insult to the government: but would the senate regard it as an insult to itself?—did it identify the emperor's cause with its own?—might it not rather decline to interfere between the master and the instrument he had himself chosen, and lean, at least in inclination, to the side of a member of its own body, in opposition to the authority which rivalled and controlled it? Such considerations as these, which Piso himself fully understood, weighed forcibly on Tiberius, and made his measures appear uncertain and vacillating. The culprit relied on the boldness and decision of his attitude. When required by Sentius to refer his cause to the judgment of the emperor, he did not hesitate to accept the challenge. From the coast of Cilicia he had proceeded in the direction of Rome; nevertheless he did not care to betray by his haste any symptoms of anxiety. He travelled slowly from city to city, and instead of taking the direct route by Dyrrhachium and Brundisium, sent his son in advance with

Piso refers his cause to the emperor.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 6.



letters full of obsequious deference to the emperor, while he stepped himself aside into Dalmatia to obtain an interview with Drusus, who had returned there from attending the obsequies of Germanicus. Tiberius received the young man with courtesy and even favour. Drusus, on the other hand, whose demeanour was generally open even to bluntness, affected a reserve and caution, in which he had evidently been instructed by his father, but assured Piso of his hope and trust that at the rumours about the manner of the Cæsar's death would prove entirely groundless.<sup>1</sup>

The minds both of the citizens and the chiefs of the state being in a feverish state of excitement, every step the culprit took became a matter of suspicion and misconstruction. If on landing at Ancona he fell in with a legion on its march to Rome, having been removed from Pannonia under orders for Africa, and accompanied it for some miles on its route, it was reported that he had unduly courted the favour of the officers and soldiers; if, again, he left it at Narnia, and betook himself to the easier transport of a vessel down the Tiber, it was suggested that his conscious guilt sought to avoid just suspicion, or that his treasonable plans were not yet fixed and mature. It was charged against him as a grave misdemeanour that he had allowed his bark to be fastened to the walls of the Cæsarean mausoleum on the margin of the Campus Martius. The pomp and even the affectation of cheerfulness with which he took his way into the city, attended by a retinue of clients, together with his wife Plancina, and a bevy of her female friends, gave umbrage to a populace bent on taking offence. They pointed with malicious spite, as their ancestors might have done two or three centuries before, to the mansion of the Pisos overhanging the forum, in proud defiance of the commons below, and resented, as tokens of guilty ambition, the laurels and flags with which it was decorated to receive its long absent master; nor less at the number of friends and

He reaches  
Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 7, 8.

courtiers, who repaired thither to salute him and partake of his hospitality.<sup>1</sup> The death of the poisoner Martina, which occurred suddenly on her passage to Rome, was regarded by many as a device of the accused himself, or was taken as an indication of collusion between him and his prosecutors.<sup>2</sup>

Such being the temper of the public mind, and so strong the appearances of Piso's double guilt, there could be no lack of accusers to spring up, and seize the occasion to make a show of their eloquence, their zeal for law and justice, their love for the Roman people and the family of their ruler. It might rather be apprehended that the ends of justice would be defeated by the precipitation of intemperate assailants, or even by the false play of pretended enemies. Accordingly when Fulcinus Trio, a young noble, ambitious of notoriety, came forward, the day after Piso's arrival, to lodge an impeachment against him, the real friends of Germanicus, those to whom he had personally committed the vindication of his cause, were alarmed for the success of their maturer plans. Two of these, Vitellius and Veranius, immediately entered the court, and protested against Trio's right to prosecute at all, declaring at the same time for themselves that they were not come to declaim in behalf of Germanicus, but to attest by their solemn evidence the fact of Piso's criminality. These representations were judged to have weight, and Trio was refused permission to make his oration against the culprit, as regarded his alleged misconduct in the East: he was indulged, however, with an opportunity of uttering an harangue on the early career of Piso, and of blackening his character, to the extent of his ability, by a general defamation. Such were the facilities the Roman procedure gave to the young and ambitious declaimer: but attacks like these were mere empty displays of rhetoric, and served no purpose but to amuse the idle or gratify the malicious. Meanwhile Piso's friends, disregarding such frivolous demonstrations, and fixing their attention on the real point

His accusers  
prepare their  
process against  
him.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 7.

of attack, were striving to secure the emperor himself as judge in the case; for the emperor's consular or tribunitian power gave him formal jurisdiction in the criminal trials, whenever he chose to exercise it. Piso had every reason to shrink from an appeal to the people; nor was he without grave apprehension of the bias of the senators against him. His best chance of a favourable, or even of a fair hearing lay before the tribunal of Tiberius himself, who had at least no partiality for Germanicus, and who, it was well known, was indisposed to parade himself as the author of strong measures against senators and nobles. But Tiberius, on his part, shrunk from the invidious position of a judge in a case so delicate. Not directly refusing the onerous responsibility, he seated himself indeed on the bench with certain of his own intimates as his assessors; but after listening for a time to the denunciations of the one party, and the obtestations of the other, he finally remitted the adjudication of the cause intact to the senate.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing now remained for the accused but to prepare his defence in the regular way. He solicited the noblest and ablest men in the city to plead his cause. L. Arruntius, Asinius Gallus, S. Pompeius, and others hardly less illustrious, refused on various pretences to defend him. M. Lepidus, L. Piso, and Livineius Regulus, at length promised to stand by him; and great was the admiration of the citizens at the confidence of the friends of Germanicus on the one hand, and the assurance of the culprit on the other; while they anxiously asked one another what the conduct of Tiberius would be, and whether he would sternly repress all personal feeling, and leave free scope to the force of truth and the influence of eloquence and reason.<sup>2</sup> The proceedings indeed were opened by the emperor in a speech of studied fairness and moderation.<sup>3</sup> He represented that Piso had been a trusty officer of Augustus, and that he had himself, not without the

The trial of  
Piso before the  
Senate.

The proceed-  
ings opened by  
a speech from  
Tiberius.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 12.: "Die Senatus Cæsar orationem habuit meditato temperamento."

consent of the senate, attached him as a coadjutor to Germanicus.<sup>1</sup> Whether in that capacity he had exasperated his chief by contumacy and rivalry, whether he had betrayed satisfaction at his death, or even actually effected it, it was for the senate, he said, impartially to decide: if the former, he would himself resent it as a father, but he would not judicially punish it as a prince; but if the latter, it would be the duty of the senators on their part to visit the murderer with a murderer's reward, and console the family of the deceased with the vengeance which the law prescribed. He recommended them to examine carefully the charges of seditious intrigues and irregular ambition; and whether the culprit had actually attempted to recover his province by arms, or his faults had been exaggerated by the malice of his accusers, whose over-zeal the emperor felt bound at the outset to stigmatize and repress.<sup>2</sup> *For what right had they, he asked, to expose the body to the public eye, and invite provincials and foreigners to examine the pretended tokens of poison which it was impossible to test, if after all the crime was still unproved and matter of judicial inquiry?* He went on to charge the judges not to allow his private sorrow, great as he assured them it was, to influence their decision; to exhort the accused to omit no topic suitable for his own defence, or, if necessary, for the inculpation of Germanicus himself; to encourage his advocates to exert their eloquence to the utmost in the cause of the unfortunate defendant; finally, he begged all parties to disregard any popular surmises that might be promulgated to his own personal discredit in the matter.

Thus encouraged, or possibly perplexed and frightened,

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Adjutorem Germanico datum." For the force of this expression, see above.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus says, "Armis repetita provincia;" that is, he claimed by force of arms possession of *his own* province. If he had occupied a post such as Celenderis in another province, and employed its native forces, there would have been no question of the gravity of his crime, and no excuse for neglecting to animadvert upon it. A. Zumpt, *Comment. Epigraph.* ii.

the senators addressed themselves to the work before them.

Speeches in accusation.

Two days were allowed to the managers of the prosecution for exhibiting their charges; then, after an interval of six days, three more were granted for the defence. Fulcinus Trio, who had thrust himself, as has been said, into the front, began with a long and desultory attack on the conduct of Piso when he formerly governed in Spain; an abuse of rhetoric only sanctioned by custom, but which could hardly produce even the petty result to which it was directed, of creating an unfavourable impression against the accused in the minds of his judges. An important part of the space allotted for the prosecution was wasted in this unprofitable skirmish. When, however, the genuine accusers stood forward with the decisive features of the case in hand, they found the tribunal, from whatever reason, so well disposed towards them, that they were not required to bring on every point the most conclusive evidence. Servæus, Veranius, and Vitellius followed one another in denouncing the culprit with equal fervour, and the last of the three with conspicuous eloquence, for his enmity to Germanicus, his intrigues with the soldiery, his attempts, only too successful, by poison and magic, against the life of his commander, and finally, his armed assault on the prerogatives of the republic. Had Piso not been first conquered as an enemy, argued Vitellius, he could not have been now prosecuted as a criminal. Then followed an interval for the judges to reflect, and for the accused to prepare his defence. On most points of attack neither refutation nor excuse were possible; the political charges were too patent to be rebutted, too flagrant to be palliated. Here at least the replies of Piso were weak and

Piso defends himself.

vacillating. The charge of poison, however, he did not shrink from meeting with a steadfast denial; and this, indeed, either from mismanagement on the part of the prosecution, or from the real absence of any reasonable grounds of proof, had completely broken down; for it was founded not on any alleged connexion between Piso and the notorious Martina, nor on testimony extorted from

his slaves, whom he freely tendered for examination on the rack, but on the monstrous and incredible story, that, at a banquet given by the prince, while reclining at his side, he had with his own hands communicated poison to the viands on the table.<sup>1</sup> The rumours of magical incantations were invented perhaps for the populace of Antioch and Rome: though repeated in the presence of the senators, we hear of no attempt either to substantiate or refute them. But the judges, some on one account, some on another, were implacable. Tiberius himself could not forgive the attempt upon the province, and the senators, for the most part, were obstinately convinced that the prince had met his death by unfair contrivance. There prevailed, however, among them a vague suspicion that there had been collusion of some sort between Piso and the emperor himself. It is possible that some of the judges or the accusers ventured to suggest that Piso's instructions should be produced, and that this was refused both by the one and the other.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile the people had satisfied themselves of the full atrocity of the culprit's guilt. They surrounded the tribunal with cries of vengeance, threatening that if acquitted by his judges, they would tear the murderer to pieces with their own hands. They would have broken the busts and statues of Piso within their reach, and exposed them, in default of his own mangled limbs, on the Gemonian stairs, had not a military force arrived in time to protect them. The criminal was removed from the bar in a closed litter, attend-

<sup>1</sup> Slaves could not be questioned by torture against their own master, except, under the emperors, in cases of treason; but he might offer them to be tortured as witnesses in his favour. Rein, *Criminal-Recht der Römer*, p. 542. Pflny mentions (*Hist. Nat.* xi. 71.) that Vitellius in his speech, still extant in the writer's day, argued that poison had been administered, from the fact he asserted that the heart of Germanicus would not burn. (Comp. Suet. *Calig.* 1.) The same, however, was believed to occur in the case of the morbus cardiacus (heartburn or cardialgia: v. Hardouin's note); and Piso pleaded that this was the malady of Germanicus.

<sup>2</sup> At this place there is an unfortunate lacuna in the MSS. of our authority Tacitus: the words, "scripsissent . . . expostulantes; quod haud minus Tiberius quam Piso abnuere," seem to point obscurely to this supposition.

ed by a tribune of the prætorians: some supposed that this was to shelter him from the popular indignation, but others already whispered that it was determined to sacrifice him.<sup>1</sup>

Thus ended the first day of the defence, and the culprit re-entered his house with a gloomy presentiment of defeat. Thus far, however, his wife had affected to unite her cause with his, and had loudly declared that she would share his fortune for good or for evil. If the general feeling was not less strong against her than against her husband, she might indulge in warmer hopes of protection from the favour of Livia; and as long as her interests were united with his, he might trust to escape under the shelter of her superior influence. But while Piso was battling desperately for his life in the Senate-house, Plancina was soliciting the empress in the recesses of the palace, keeping more aloof from him as the charges seemed to press harder, urging excuses for herself independent of him, and finally separating her cause from his. As soon as Piso

Deserted by  
Plancina, Piso  
commits sui-  
cide.

discovered this, he felt that his last hope was gone. Hesitating to confront his accusers again, he was with difficulty prevailed on by his sons to nerve his resolution for a second appearance before his judges. There he heard the charges once more repeated, and underwent interrogations which seemed to wax more manifestly hostile: but when he looked towards Tiberius, and observed how cold and reserved was his demeanour, how studiously he repressed every mark either of compassion or anger, he felt that his doom was inevitable. Carried back once more to his own dwelling, he called for his tablets, as if to compose the peroration of his defence, wrote a few lines, which he sealed and delivered to a freedman, after which he bathed and dressed as usual for supper, and retired, after taking it, to his couch. At a late hour of the night, seizing the moment of his wife leaving his bedchamber, he ordered the doors to be closed. The first who entered at daybreak

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 13, 14.: "Vario rumore, custos salutis an mortis exactor sequatur."

discovered him lying with his throat severed, and his sword on the ground beside him.<sup>1</sup>

Such an end at such a moment gave rise to many whispered surmises. The Romans, ever prone to suspect foul play and underhand contrivance, could easily be led to impute the catastrophe to the emperor himself: and it is worth while to notice that our historian reveals to us on this occasion the questionable sources to which we seem to owe many of his gravest incriminations. *I have heard old people mention, he says, that Piso had often certain papers in his hand, the contents of which he did not publicly divulge; but that his friends used to affirm that they were the actual instructions addressed to him by Tiberius regarding the unfortunate Germanicus. These he had resolved to lay before the senators, and reveal the real guilt of the emperor, had not Sejanus, the confidant of Tiberius, dissuaded him by false hopes from his purpose. They added that he did not kill himself, but was, in point of fact, assassinated.*<sup>2</sup> The writer concludes this narration, however, with cautioning the reader that he does not affirm this circumstance as an ascertained fact; and such, it must be remarked, is too frequently his habit, to be excused, perhaps, only from the paucity of trustworthy documents in his reach,—to insinuate the truth of popular rumours under pretence of merely recounting them. It is not too much to assert that he really means us to believe most of the stories he thus repeats, under the protest that he cannot vouch for them. With this caution against the seductive influence of the most eloquent of historians, I return to the narrative before us.

Tiberius expressed, it seems, his mortification at the death of the criminal: he might easily foresee and deplore the suspicions to which it would expose him. He allowed the son of the deceased to read to the sen-

Rumour that  
Piso was put to  
death by the  
emperor's order,  
unfairly  
countenanced  
by Tacitus.

Sentence  
against Piso.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 16.: "Quorum neutrum asseveraverim: neque tamen occidere debui narratum ab iis qui nostram ad juventam duraverunt."



ate the last words his father had written, which were now found to contain a vindication of his own children from the charge of treason from which he had failed to relieve himself, and an appeal to the emperor in their favour, by the five and forty years of his own faithful services, by the consulships accorded him by Augustus, and the friendship extended to him by Tiberius himself. Such, he said, was his last dying petition. Of the false Plancina he made no mention at all. The case for the defence being thus abruptly cut short, the accusers might still use their right to reply. But the senators were not unmoved at the spectacle of war still waged against a prostrate and insensible victim. They were satisfied with expunging Piso's name from the Fasti, and confiscating a portion of his estates, decreeing at the same time that his elder son Marcus should be banished for ten years, and Cnæus, the younger, renounce the prænomen he had derived from his father. Tiberius interfered to obtain some mitigation even of this sentence, protesting that it was too much to disgrace the name of Piso, when that of Marcus Antonius, who had fought against his country, and of Julius, who had dishonoured the imperial house, were allowed to retain their place in the rolls of honour. He spared also the property of the deceased, on this, as on other occasions, displaying a laudable abstinence in this respect. But he had used his influence, in deference to his mother, to screen Plancina from prosecution; and so poignantly did he feel the disgrace of this interference, so much was he mortified at the murmurs of the citizens, as to seek to repair his credit by a show of lenity and moderation towards her husband and family. At the same time, he restrained the adulation which would have decreed him extraordinary honours for thus avenging the loss of Germanicus. It was no matter, he protested, of public joy and thanksgiving; it was the last act of a domestic calamity, fit only to be buried in the recesses of his own memory. Upon the accusers, however, he bestowed places in the priesthood, and promised to elevate Trio to civil distinctions, cautioning him at the same time to use

his powers of oratory with temper and discretion in future.<sup>1</sup>

A calm review of the circumstances of this celebrated trial seems to leave no cloud of suspicion on the conduct of the emperor himself. It results clearly from the acknowledgments of the narrator, whose hostility to Tiberius is strongly marked, as we shall see, throughout the course of his history, that the evidence in proof of the murder was completely nugatory. Still less does there appear any reasonable ground to implicate Tiberius himself in the schemes of Piso, even supposing Piso's guilt in this respect to be still matter of question. The fault, which gave rise to the most unfavourable surmises, lay in his want of firmness and decision in conducting the case. However deeply irritated at his proconsul's contumacy, he could not divest himself of the jealous distrust of his too subservient nobles, which impelled him constantly to throw on them the responsibility of an inquiry, which, as chief of the state, was legitimately his own. The position he held was a source of unceasing alarm and anxiety to him. Already he found himself beset by the first dangers of an intruding dynasty, the repeated apparition of rival claimants and pretenders. The first steps of his illustrious predecessor had been dogged by the upstart Amati-  
Tiberius free from all suspicion in regard to the death of Germanicus.  
No proof of the murder.  
 tius. At a later period Augustus had been persecuted by a bold impostor, who declared himself the real son of Octavia, for whom Marcellus had been substituted by fraud.<sup>2</sup> The death of the wretched Postumus was speedily followed by the enterprise of one of his slaves, named Clemens, who pretended to represent him. On the demise of Augustus, this man, we are told, formed the design of hastening to Planasia, and carrying off his master to the legions on the Rhine. He might have succeeded, but for the slowness of the merchant vessel in which he sailed for the island. On arriving there he found  
Enterprise of the Pretender Clemens.  
A. D. 16.  
A. U. 769.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. iii. 17-19.

<sup>2</sup> Val. Max. ix. 15. 2.

the prince already despatched. Conceiving at once a still more daring project, he secreted or dispersed the ashes of the murdered man, to destroy the evidence of his death, and retired for a time to Cosa, on the opposite coast of Etruria, till his hair and beard were grown, to favour a certain likeness which he actually bore to him. Meanwhile, taking a few intimates into his confidence, he spread a report, which found ready listeners, that Agrippa still lived. He glided from town to town, showing himself by twilight, for a few minutes only at a time, to men prepared for the sudden apparition, until it became noised abroad that the gods had saved the grandson of Augustus from the fate intended for him, and that he was about to visit the city and claim his rightful inheritance. At Ostia, Clemens was received by a great concourse of people, and numbers repaired privily to him on his entrance into Rome. It was long, however, before Tiberius could resolve to act vigorously against him. He would rather have left the vulgar imposture to die a natural death, than interfere to check it with the bruit of arms. At last he determined to exert himself. The pretender was speedily entrapped, by two simulated believers, and brought bound to the palace. When asked by Tiberius what right he had to assume the name of Agrippa? *The same*, he replied, *that you have to that of Cæsar*. The names of no loftier accomplices could be extorted from him, and it is probable that the design was from first to last merely a wild conception of his own. Tiberius was glad to bury the whole matter in oblivion. He put the man to death in the recesses of the palace, and had the body secretly removed, nor did he cause inquiry to be made into any circumstances of the attempt, though some of his own family and many knights and senators were said to have privily favoured, and even given money to advance it. Such was the received account of the affair; as much, that is, as the emperor chose to reveal, or the people ventured to guess of it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 39, 40.; Suet. *Tib.* 25. • Dion, *lvi.* 16.

But the sally of an obscure slave was far less formidable than the intrigues of illustrious nobles, equals of the emperor himself in birth and ancestral honours. It was a tradition of the party which Tiberius historically represented, that every scion of a consular house was a possible candidate for the empire; and if his own jealousy ever slept for a moment, officious advisers were not wanting to excite his fears, and urge him to renewed vigilance. A young noble named Libo Drusus, of the Scribonian gens, the same which had given consorts to both Octavius and Sextus Pompeius, was suspected, from the accession of Tiberius, of cherishing the project of supplanting him. His juvenile ambition had been fostered by the artifices of a pretended friend, who had tampered with the weakness of his character, and led him into criminal relations with the soothsayers and diviners, who were casting the horoscopes of the unwary, and flattering with dangerous dreams every illicit aspiration. Libo admitted to his bosom the wildest hopes of fulfilling the pretended destiny of his illustrious ancestors. The sharer of his counsels betrayed them in due time to the emperor. Such, however, was the apprehension Tiberius entertained of the influence of a noble name, that he did not venture at once to check him. On the contrary, he continued for more than a year to load him with honours; while such was his fear of personal violence, that, when Libo assisted him at a sacrifice, he caused him to be furnished with a knife of tin; and in conversing with him, pretended always to lean confidentially on his arm, to prevent him from drawing forth the weapon which he might carry beneath his girdle.<sup>1</sup> It was not till he had obtained distinct proof that Libo had consulted a magician, who pretended to evoke the dead for unhallowed inquiries, that Tiberius ventured to convene the senate, to *deliberate*, as the tenour of his summons ran, *upon a dreadful and monstrous crime*. Libo was soon made aware of his danger. He

Intrigues of  
Libo Drusus.  
A. D. 16.  
A. U. 760.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. Tib. 25.

clothed himself in mourning, and glided from house to house, suing in vain for the advocacy of his illustrious friends. All shut their doors, or turned their backs upon him. On the day of the trial, he appeared in the senate without a patron, and studied only to excite commiseration by real or pretended sickness. Of accusers there was no lack. Among them was Firmius, the false friend already noticed, and Fulcinius Trio, the rabid declaimer. The charges produced embraced some of the wildest fictions. One of the prosecutors asserted that he had been promised gold enough to pave the Appian Way to Brundisium. On this and other testimonies scarcely less trivial, it was determined to examine his slaves; and as the law forbade the examination of a master's slaves against him in a capital case, Tiberius caused them to be enfranchised before subjecting them to the question. Libo now felt that his fate was decided. Returning home, after the first day's investigation, for as yet the personal liberty of the noble Roman was never restricted, even under a capital charge, he sat down to table, but after some hesitation, accomplished his own destruction.<sup>1</sup> The prosecution was carried on notwithstanding; and when the culprit's guilt was finally declared to be proved, Tiberius asserted that he intended to pardon him, had he allowed him the opportunity.<sup>2</sup>

The readiness of the senators to combine against the presumed enemies of the prince, the zeal with which they vied with one another in leading the prosecution against them, the eagerness with which they united in decreeing their death, and the confiscation of their property, all these tokens of devotion might have reassured even the fears of Tiberius, and made him feel secure of the submission of his courtiers. But it seems to have had rather the contrary effect of alarming him. He saw in it the most fatal evidence of the degradation of the Roman character,

<sup>1</sup> Thus when Cicero assigned the Catilinarian conspirators to the custody of certain nobles, the legal fiction of their freedom was ostensibly respected.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 27-31.

and he augured from it that the time would arrive when, every bond of religious feeling being broken, the loyalty with which Augustus had inspired his subjects would give way to selfish passions, and the man who should succeed in out-bidding him in popularity, would become master of their venal affections. These apprehensions were increased by every expression of freedom hazarded by his anticipated rivals, which he presumed to be grounded on the conviction that their time was coming, and that there was in the community a large mass of feeling which responded to their pretensions. Among the nobles there was a certain class who affected to indemnify themselves for the loss of substantial liberty by petty sallies of impatience, and scarce disguised irony, and among these Piso had been eminently conspicuous. Thus, for instance, when Tiberius had announced, on a certain occasion, that, contrary to his usual reserve, he would give his opinion on a particular charge in person, Piso ventured to ask, would he speak first or last?—*if first*, he added, *I shall have a guide to follow ; if last, I fear lest I may through ignorance dissent from you.* Such, says Tacitus, were some of the last traces of expiring liberty.<sup>1</sup> While, however, any such traces, however slight, still remained, the shadowy phantom of the Republic continued to flit before the eyes of the Cæsar. There was still, he apprehended, a germ of sentiment existing, on which a scion of his own house, or even a stranger, might boldly throw himself, and raise the standard of patrician independence. The death of Piso concurred with that of Germanicus to relieve him from the terrors of this hateful anticipation. From this time he began really to reign. He was well aware, indeed, that he had fastened on himself the hatred of the citizens by the mere suspicion of his complicity in deaths which had so manifestly served his interests; he knew that all his acts and measures would henceforth be construed to his injury, and a dark cloud of

Relieved by the  
deaths of Ger-  
manicus and  
Piso.

national distrust hang for ever on his memory. But, on the other hand, these were the mere shadows of evil. To the loss of his good name he was becoming more and more hardened. The flattery of poets and historians, even the clamorous applause of the populace, he could buy again if he chose; but with his cynical contempt for his people, he did not think them worth the cost in shows and largesses. He now felt himself safe from the machinations of his nearest enemies, and free to exchange the disguised autocracy of his predecessor, which he wanted himself the tact and moderation to wield, for the direct and harsh exercise of uncontrolled dominion.

Nevertheless, while Tiberius was thus rising supreme over the laws of his country, and the lives and fortunes of the citizens, he was not himself exempt from certain concealed and mysterious influences, which continued almost insensibly to direct and control him. The first of these was the will of Livia, who seemed now, in extreme old age, to reap the full fruits of her ambition, the passion to which she had subjected every other inclination through her long career of intrigue. Her son had risen under her auspices, and mainly, perhaps, by her direct contrivance, to the summit of power which she had so deeply coveted for him, and her own influence over him had increased rather than diminished with his success. All Rome regarded the empress-mother with far more awe and obsequious submission than the empress-consort. If she had really been the mistress of the councils of Augustus, he at least had retained the ostensible power. But the habits of obedience she had early impressed on her son remained deeply stamped on his retentive disposition; nor, however much her yoke might sometimes gall him, had he the spirit to reject it when he became the master of all the world besides. The women whom she admitted to her intimacy presumed to defy the laws, under her protection. On one occasion her favourite, Urgulania, being cited as a witness before the senate, refused to appear, and the prætor was complaisantly sent to

Secret Influence  
of Livia,

take her examination in private, a privilege not accorded even to the sacred character of the Vestals.<sup>1</sup> On another, the same Urgulania was the cause of a struggle for supremacy between Tiberius and his mother. It was considered a remarkable instance of firmness on his part, that he insisted on her paying down the fine imposed on her by a judicial sentence. But the greatest triumph of Livia's authority was seen in the acquittal of her friend Plancina. The emperor, constiminate as was his power of dissimulation, failed to disguise the disgust he felt at the part he was reduced to play in deference to this love of power.

Another influence behind the throne has already been glanced at, in accounting for the jealousy Tiberius felt of the martial aspirations of Germanicus. The most eloquent of the emperor's flatterers, in con- <sup>and of Sejanus.</sup> cluding his brief survey of Roman history which has come down to us, with a review of the opening promise, such as he represents it, of this ill-fated reign, after painting in flaunting colours the virtues and successes of the third Cæsar, glides into the reflection, that the good fortune of the greatest men is generally to be traced in part to the merits of their most cherished advisers. Thus the valour of the Scipios was supported by the genius of the Lælii, and Augustus himself reclined on the arms of an Agrippa and a Taurus. In like manner, he adds, did Tiberius rejoice in the powerful aid of Lucius Sejanus, a man of rare ability, vigorous alike in mind and body, a loyal servant, a cheerful companion, one whose natural modesty evinced his actual desert, and smoothed the way for his well-merited advancement.<sup>2</sup> This and much more does Velleius say in the praise of the favourite of Tiberius, the man whose name has become a by-word in history for all that is most fulsome in adulation, most base in dissimulation, most atrocious in crime. Sejanus belonged to the Ælian gens, perhaps by adoption, and his paternal family was only of equestrian

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. ii. 34. : "Tiberius hactenus indulgere matri civile ratus."

<sup>2</sup> Velleius Paternulus, ii. 127.



rank.<sup>1</sup> On the mother's side he is said to have descended from a more illustrious ancestry. He was born at Vulsinii in Etruria. He seems to have first established his fortunes on the favours of a wealthy debauchee;<sup>2</sup> but when he succeeded in attaching himself to the person of the young Caius Cæsar, the prospect of public eminence began to open upon him. On his second patron's premature decease he transferred himself to the service of Tiberius, over whom he soon acquired an influence, which it became the object of his life to confirm and extend. But the arts by which such influence is obtained over a timid and self-distrusting character, however sly and suspicious, do not always imply any great superiority of talent; and the enemies of Sejanus refused to allow the object of their abhorrence the praise even of eminent talents. They would only admit that he was active and hardy in frame, and was not deficient in boldness and enterprise: he had, they said, the address to conceal his own vices, while he was shrewd in unmasking the disguises of others. His pride and meanness were equal one to the other, and he could carry a pretence of moderation in his demeanour, while his lust of power and lucre was really unbounded.<sup>3</sup>

On his patron's succession to the empire, Sejanus was found useful, and retained the influence he had acquired by his skill in relieving him from the weight of his burdens without seeming to take them on himself. Tiberius sent him on a confidential mission to advise the young Drusus in Pannonia; but he was speedily recalled from this distant service, and appointed colleague with his father in the command of the prætorian cohorts, quartered in the vicinity of the capital. This charge placed him in a position of the strictest intimacy with the emperor,

Sejanus prefect  
of the Præ-  
torian guards.

<sup>1</sup> L. Ælius Sejanus was the son of Seius Strabo, a Roman knight.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 1.; Dion, lvii. 19. This was M. Apicius, the second of the three noted gourmands of the name, who are supposed to have flourished in succession from the time of Augustus.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. l. c.; Dion, l. c.

over whose personal safety it was his duty to watch, while he provided for the execution of his orders in Rome. Here he may have suggested that distrust of Germanicus to which the Romans ascribed the hero's recall from the Rhenish frontier; he may have prompted the mission of Piso, as a check on the presumed ambition of the young prince in Asia; he may have whispered to the proconsul of Syria an assurance that his opposition to his chief would not be distasteful to the sovereign power at home. However this may be, Tiberius required a staff to lean upon, and Sejanus was strong enough and bold enough to supply one. Anxious as the new emperor was, from his first accession, to know everything, and to do everything himself; impatient as he was of leaving affairs to take their course under a wise but distant superintendence, and jealous of all interference with his own control; yet, finding day by day that the concerns of his vast administration were slipping away beyond the sphere of his personal guidance, from the inability of any single mind to embrace them all together, he was reduced to the necessity of falling back on extraneous assistance; and he preferred, from the character of his mind, to draw irregular aid from a domestic favourite, rather than throw irresponsible power into the hands of his remote vicegerents. He controlled the satraps in his provinces by the agency of a vizier at home.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE COMITIA: 1. ELECTION OF MAGISTRATES; 2. LEGISLATION; 3. JURISDICTION: TRANSFERRED TO THE SENATE, AND HENCE TO THE EMPEROR HIMSELF.—THE EMPEROR'S CONTROL OVER THE SENATE.—THE LAW OF MAJESTAS: ITS ORIGIN, APPLICATION, AND EXTENSION UNDER TIBERIUS FROM ACTS TO WORDS AND INJURIOUS LANGUAGE.—CASES OF CONSTRUCTIVE MAJESTAS.—DELATION ENCOURAGED BY TIBERIUS.—CONSOLIDATION OF THE ROMAN DOMINIONS UNDER TIBERIUS.—STATIONS AND DISCIPLINE OF THE LEGIONS.—THE GOVERNMENT AND IMPROVED TREATMENT OF THE PROVINCES.—GOVERNMENT OF ITALY AND THE CITY.—DISSIPATION OF THE TIMES.—MEASURES OF TIBERIUS.—HIS OWN VICES AND VIRTUES.—HIS DEFERENCE TO THE SENATE.—DEFECTS OF TEMPER AND DEMEANOUR.

**T**HE democracy, when roused to deadly struggle against the aristocracy, generally gains the victory; but the fruits of victory it has seldom the capacity to retain. The empire of the Cæsars was founded, as we have seen, on the passions and just claims of the popular branch of the Roman community; but while the show of power, its trappings, and even its emoluments, fell again into the hands of the nobility, the real substance eluded, as usual in such cases, the grasp both of the one and the other. We have already remarked the care of Augustus to raise the dignity of the senatorial order, while he repressed all free action in the commons, and deprived them, one by one, of the prerogatives they had acquired through so many revolutions. Though the descendant and representative of Marius, he was in fact, as regarded the relations of the two rival orders of the state, no other than a second Sulla.<sup>1</sup>

General result of the struggle between democracy and aristocracy.

<sup>1</sup> See Hoeck's *Röm. Gesch.* i 3. p. 50. foll. I have found the advantage of

But whatever remained to be done, to reduce the Roman plebs to utter insignificance, was speedily effected by the regulations of Tiberius. The balance between the conflicting powers of the state was only trimmed for the moment by the sagacity and fortune of Augustus, for whom all parties were content to waive the exaction of their legitimate or pretended rights. When a successor followed, with less personal authority and less delicacy in the management of it, the machine of government might have been in danger of collapsing. The appointment of magistrates, the enactment of laws, the constitution even of the judicial tribunals, had all been left unfixed in principle, and abandoned, as occasion arose, to the wisdom and moderation of the emperor, on which all equally relied. The Romans acquiesced in the fiction which was now palmed upon them of equal laws and a regular constitution: but in fact the limits of every department of government were normally undefined. This was a state of things which, however passive in temper the mass of the nation had now become, could not longer endure in the face of a restless and sensitive nobility. Tiberius, moreover, from the character of his mind, required a more logical development of the polity he had undertaken to direct, and that polity had begun spontaneously to assume, as the condition of its existence, both outward form and internal organization.

The balance trimmed by the tact of Augustus.

More logical character of the polity of Tiberius.

The transfer of the business of the popular assemblies to the senate is announced, as we have seen, by Tacitus with a coolness and indifference which may seem scarcely worthy of its apparent importance. Whatever the aspirations of the historian may have been for the so-called liberty of the old aristocracy, the traditions of which he has hallowed by his eloquent declamations, it is probable that no Roman of his day, the second century from the fall of Roman independence, really felt the value of the

The three-fold functions of the Comitia.

having before me this author's luminous view of the constitution of the empire under Tiberius.

forms of the free state, which had so long passed from degradation to oblivion. But in fact the change which he here announced was less important than at first sight it appears. On the other hand, the action of the *Comitia* had been already paralysed for half a century, and was now only quickened occasionally by the emperor himself to serve his own purposes, while, on the other, its presumed functions, though thus ostensibly abolished, were not in reality absolutely extinguished. The functions of the *Comitia*, whether the people met by tribes or centuries, were properly threefold, those of Election, of Legislation, and of Jurisdiction; and it will be desirable to pause at this point of our narration, to review briefly the position in which the empire found these functions respectively.—

I. The popular privilege of election, whether of the higher or the lower magistrates, had been limited by the first Cæsar, and after him by the triumvirs. In the plenitude of their confidence, the people had urged their patron, the Dictator, to assume the sole nomination to all civil offices; and it was by a mere act of grace on his part that the free choice of one half of them was remitted to the popular assemblies, while of the other he accepted only the right to nominate and recommend, the latter act being of course virtually equivalent to a direct appointment.<sup>1</sup> The proceedings of the triumvirs were merely irregular and revolutionary.<sup>2</sup> They grasped the direct appointment of all: but it was among the first cares of Augustus, on succeeding to his parent's inheritance, to return to the principles set forth by Cæsar, and restrict himself to the nomination of one half of the magistrates, leaving to the assemblies of the tribes and centuries the unfettered election of the rest. He claimed only a veto on the nomination of unworthy candidates; but while he reserved to himself the decision of what should constitute merit or demerit, he reduced in fact the

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the consuls, the appointment of whom he reserved solely to himself. Dion, xliii. 45. See above, ch. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Appian, iv. 2., v. 73.; Dion, xlvii. 15., xlvii. 35. 53.

succession to all places of trust and power to a matter of personal favour. Such was the pretended restoration of the prerogatives of the people, for which Augustus obtained credit:<sup>1</sup> it was a part of the general system of dissimulation with which he deceived a willing people, a system which could only succeed in the hands of one whose personal merits were dearer to them than any consistent theory of government. It was with a peculiar feeling of complacency that they beheld, year after, the solemn mockery of the emperor's descent into the Field of Mars, when he led his clients by the hand, recommending their claims, and asking for them the suffrages of all comers, till he finally registered his own vote in their behalf.<sup>2</sup> Such was the practice of Augustus through the greater part of his long reign. Towards its close, when he could less easily bear the fatigue of this repeated exertion, he contented himself with furnishing his nominees with written credentials, and spared himself the trouble of attending personally with them.<sup>3</sup> Even this was not precisely a novelty; it was following the precedent of the Dictator, and it was accepted by the people as a sufficient recognition of their ultimate right of election. They continued to go through the ancient forms of polling, with the bridge, the penfold, and the urn; and with respect at least to those places to which the emperor abstained from nominating, a stranger only historically conversant with the system of the free-state might have found perhaps nothing in the methods of procedure to awaken him from his dream of the republic of the Scipios.

Augustus nominates magistrates to the Comitia.

With an instrument of government so conveniently adjusted to his hand, so facile and flexible to every touch, it

<sup>1</sup> Suet. Oct. 40.: "Comitiarum pristinum jus reduxit." Dion, lvi. 46.: τὸ τε ἀξίωμα τῶν ἀρχαιρεσιῶν αὐτῷ ἐτήρησε.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. Oct. 56.: "Quoties magistratuum comitiis interesset, tribus cum candidatis suis circumibat, supplicabatque more solemnī. Ferebat et ipse suffragium, ut unus e populo."

<sup>3</sup> Dion, lv. 24.: γράμματα τίνα ἐκτιθεὶς συνίστη τῷ τε πλάθει καὶ τῷ δήμῳ δοῦναι ἐκπούδαζε.

Tiberius nominates to the senate.

is not likely that Augustus ever thought of placing further restrictions on the pretended freedom of election. Tiberius, however, found it advisable to announce that the reform which he himself meditated had already been conceived and planned by his predecessor.<sup>1</sup> But the transfer of power, or rather of the show of power, which he made, did not extend to closing the assemblies

The Comitia still meet to accept the appointments of the senate.

either of the tribes or centuries for purposes of election. While he continued the system of nomination and recommendation, addressing it not to the Comitia but to the senate, he still allowed the people to meet in their accustomed places, and with the ancient forms, to accept and ratify the choice of the superior order.<sup>2</sup> Hence we find the term Comitia still occasionally employed, though not quite correctly, to represent the election of magistrates; and the meetings of the people in the booths or septa, and on the plain of the Campus Martius, continued to take place periodically to a much later period of the imperial history.<sup>3</sup> The candidates, already assured of their appointment, waited on the steps of the neighbouring temples while the auspices were taken and other tedious solemnities, which had long lost their significance, performed; and these were finally closed by the announcement of a her-

<sup>1</sup> Vell. ii. 124.: "Primum principalium ejus operum fuit ordinatio comitiorum quam manu sua scriptam D. Augustus reliquerat." The pretexts assigned may be surmised from the further remarks this author makes on the subject (c. 126.): "revocata in forum fides; submota foro seditio, ambitio campo, discordia curæ; sepultæque ac situ obsitæ justitia, æquitas, industria civitati redditæ."

<sup>2</sup> Thus although in *Ann.* i. 15. Tacitus had said that the Comitia were now transferred from the Campus to the Senate-house, in the eighty-first chapter of the same book he describes the action of the Comitia as still continuing: "De comitiis consularibus quæ tum primum illo principe ac deinceps fuere vix quidquam firmare ausim: . . . ." *Comp.* Dion, lvi. 20. I have stated in the text what appears to have been the ordinary arrangement; but this, it must be understood, was subject to occasional irregularities.

<sup>3</sup> The Comitia of the tribes under the empire met no longer in the Forum, but in the Septa Julia of Agrippa in the Campus Martius. Dion, liii. 23.

ald that the election had fallen on the nominee of the emperor.<sup>1</sup> From henceforth, however, we are to consider not only that every consular appointment is made by the mere voice of the emperor, but that every other magistrate is chosen by the senate, partly on the imperial nomination, partly with a show of free selection, and finally, that to these at least the popular sanction is also ostensibly given.<sup>2</sup> The effect of the reform, therefore, is after all not the transfer of any substantial power from the one assembly to the other, but simply an additional ray of pale and doubtful lustre cast on the laticlave of the senator.

II. The second function of the Comitia, that of legislation, stood on a somewhat different footing from that of election. The popular prerogative of choosing the officers of state had never been called in question through-  
II. The power of legislation.  
 out the career of the republic: it might be considered as absolutely inherent in the people and inalienable from them. Jealous of its own rights, and disposed to encroach upon all others, the senate notwithstanding had never ventured to claim a share in the appointment of magistrates who were to preside over the common weal. But the limits of the popular authority in the making of the laws, on the other hand, had been a constant subject of dispute between the two great powers of the state. Previous to the enactment of the famous *Lex Hortensia*, one of the great charters of the rights of the commons, the *Scitia* of the Plebs were not binding on citizens generally until they had been ratified by the senate.

<sup>1</sup> See the description of this ceremony in Pliny, *Paneg.* 63., and the passages from Suet. *Domit.* 10. and Senec. *Ep.* 118., which are brought to illustrate it.

<sup>2</sup> The practice of a later period, as described by Dion (lviii. 20.), was probably the same in substance as that of the Tiberian: τῶν δὲ δὴ καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἀρχὰς αἰτούντων ἐξελέγετο ὅσους ἤθελε, καὶ σφᾶς ἐς τὸ συνέδριον ἐπέμπε, τοῖς μὲν συνιστὰς αὐτῶν, οἵπερ ὑπὸ πάντων ἤρουντο, τοῖς δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην, καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ, τῶν δὲ κληρῶ ποιούμενος· καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἐς τὴν δῆμον καὶ ἐς τὸ πλῆθος (the centuries and the tribes) οἱ προσήκοντες αὐτῶν, τῆς ἀρχαίας δόξης ἕνεκα, καθάπερ καὶ νῦν ὥστε ἐν εἰκόني δοκεῖν γίγνεσθαι, εἰόντες ἀπεδείκνυντο.



The Comitia of the tribes were now rendered completely independent of the superior order: nevertheless it was some time before they asserted the powers thus secured to them in defiance of the senate, with which they had been long accustomed to co-operate harmoniously. The most flourishing period of the Roman free-state was that in which the two co-ordinate bodies were aware of their respective prerogatives, but each abstained from pressing them against the interests

Independent  
legislation of  
the tribes bal-  
anced by the  
decrees of sen-  
ate.

of the other. While the people were the real depositaries of legislative power, the senate enjoyed the right of nominating provincial governors, and through them of ruling the provinces: its decrees regarded the general administration of the empire, and these, as well as the appointments it made, were honourably respected by the assemblies of the commons. When, however, the Gracchi and their successors on the tribunitian benches thought fit violently to resent the advantages which the senate drew to itself from this division of government, the several prerogatives of the two orders, never accurately adjusted, were easily made to clash. The equilibrium of mutual forbearance once disturbed, it was impossible to restore the balance. Though the popular right of legislation was admitted, the senate had many ways of thwarting, as well as influencing it indirectly. The demagogues, to counteract this influence, resorted to the violent measure of requiring the assent of the senators to their most obnoxious propositions, under pain of judicial penalties.<sup>1</sup> This state of chronic hostility and defiance was only for a moment suspended by the reforms of Sulla, who compelled the tribes to submit the *Scita* to the ratification of their rivals the senate.<sup>2</sup> But the time had passed when the selfish and grasping measures of the senatorial body could be reconciled with the claims of the inferior order to its full share in the general government, and all Sulla's legislation fell with a crash together, under the pretended patronage of Crassus and

<sup>1</sup> Appian, *Bell. Civ.* i. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Appian, *Bell. Civ.* i. 53.

Pompeius. Henceforth the legislative monopoly of the comitia remained unquestioned: it was only subject to the indirect checks still left in the hands of the consuls and augurs. It was perhaps from their consciousness of the existence of these checks, however, that the leaders of the people generally contrived to secure the approval of a majority of the senate for their measures, and maintained to the last a show of concurrent legislation.<sup>1</sup>

Nor had the senate indeed refrained, on its part, from encroaching on the legislative functions of its rivals, and snatching by various devices a substantive power of legislation for itself. It demanded that its *Consulta* should have the same independent force as the *Scita* of the Plebs. As far as regarded merely administrative regulations, there was nothing in this contrary to ancient and legitimate usage; the *Senatusconsultum Ultimum*, so often alluded to, by which the senate gave full powers to the consuls in cases of emergency, was only an extreme application of its undoubted right to secure the efficiency of the executive in every act and movement. The senate pretended, however, still further to the right of annulling the resolutions of the comitia; and here again an extreme instance of its exercise has been more than once noticed, in the special release it accorded from certain laws, if not from the whole cycle of the laws of the commonwealth. To such encroachments the tribes were forced to submit whenever one of their tribunes had been gained by the opposite faction, an event of no uncommon occurrence; but no legitimate right could be established on a series, however long, of exceptional irregularities, against which the great body of the people had never failed to protest. Augustus, as the champion of the people, was careful to give full force to their legislative prerogative. Though he generally proposed his measures to the senate, and obtained its formal consent to the ordinances which emanated in fact from the

Legislative  
power grad-  
ually assumed  
by the senate.

<sup>1</sup> See Dion, xxxvi. 7. 20., xxxviii. 7.; Appian. *Bell. Civ.* ii. 12.; Hoeck, *Röm. Gesch.* i. 3. p. 58.

small committee of its body which he took into intimate counsel, he seems to have always submitted them to the comitia of the centuries also, and obtained for his Julian legislation the sanction of every order of the state.<sup>1</sup> His long and busy reign sufficed to settle the principles of law; it remained for his successor rather to regulate the details of government, than reconstruct its essential forms. Hence Tiberius, averse by temper to the multiplication of legal enactments, had little occasion to call into play the full machinery of law-making. With the wider diffusion of the franchise the resident citizens of Rome ceased to represent the interests of the conquering race; while the provincials were assuming more real importance in the eyes of the ruler, and the administration of the provinces, which had always been the function of the senate, became more and more co-ordinate with the general administration of the empire. Accordingly, without any ostensible reform, or the direct abolition of the popular prerogative, we find the power of making laws practically withdrawn, under Tiberius, from the comitia of the tribes. Two instances only are known of *Leges* passed in the regular course under his administration, while the *Consulta* of the senate are sufficiently numerous.<sup>2</sup> But the rights of the people in this respect were never formally annulled; and even through another century examples are cited of laws passed and ratified according to the usage of antiquity. The decrees of the senate, however, came, at least immediately after Tiberius, to be designated in many cases as laws, and to carry the full force of the more regular enactments.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heineccius, *Antiq. Roman*, i. tit. 2. 44. Projects of law which had been sanctioned by the senate were afterwards demanded (rogates) of the Comitia Centuriata, by which they were ratified as *leges*. But the *Scita* of the Comitia Tributa were made equivalent to *leges* by the *lex Hortensia*.

<sup>2</sup> The *lex Junia Norbana* (Gal. i. 22., iii. 56.; Ulp. i. 10.), and the *Lex Velleia* (Ulp. iii. 5.; Hoeck, *Röm. Gesch.* i. 3. p. 59.). On the other hand, examples of *senatusconsulta* constantly occur in Tacitus and Dion. The whole series of the *leges Juliae* is a monument of comitial legislation under Augustus.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Ulpian (early in the third century, A. D.) says, "Non ambigitur sena-

We have in this a second instance of the way in which an appearance of authority was given to the senate, which in fact was a mere idle show. The legislative powers of this assembly were restricted, just as the elective, by the real and substantial prerogative of the emperor, supreme alike over all.

Transferred to the emperor's senatorial cabinet and hence to the emperor himself.

Much reliance, indeed, cannot be placed on the assertion of Dion that the senate formally invited Augustus to make what proposals he pleased, and proposed even to bind itself by an oath beforehand to accept them as laws; for in the beginning of the empire the senate could hardly have assumed any such power of dispensing with the concurrence of the popular assembly.<sup>1</sup> That it obsequiously placed its own suffrage at his disposal is credible enough; but even this is to be understood of an extraordinary and momentary abdication of its proper responsibility. Nor in fact did Augustus himself definitively accept it. When, however, he chose himself a cabinet, consisting of a select number of senators, including the consuls and princes of his own family, to confer with on affairs of state, the senate did undoubtedly transfer all its proper functions to this body, which was in fact a standing committee of its own order, and was considered to represent the wisdom of the whole. The measures which had been discussed and adopted by this conclave were still promulgated before the entire assembly, by which they were accepted with acclamation, and through this channel the prince of the senate acquired unlimited power of legislation. Tiberius, it seems, did not retain this select council. His measures emanated from his own breast alone, except

tum jus facere posse." *Dig. l. 3. § 9.* Asconius had long before specified the cases in which the senate could control the legislative prerogative of the people: "Quatuor omnino genera sunt in quibus per senatum more majorem statuatur aliquid de legibus. Unum est ejusmodi, placere legem abrogari: alterum, quæ lex lata esse dicetur ea non videri populum teneri: tertium est de legum derogationibus." The fourth case, which Asconius omits, refers to the *legibus solvere*. Ascon. in *Cornel.* p. 67. ed. Orell. See Rein, *Criminal-Recht der Röm.* p. 62.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, liv. 10.

when he chose to take a private counsellor, such as Sejanus, into his confidence. He convened the fathers to listen to an address from his own mouth, in which he explained the scope of his plans, and proposed them for the assembly's consideration; or he put up some private member to make the proposition, when he chose to disguise his own inclinations. He introduced also the custom of sending a written despatch to be read to the assembly in his absence, in which his views on any project of law, proposed by himself or by another, were declared or insinuated.<sup>1</sup> But in all these cases the senate was regarded as competent to discuss and amend, and even, if it had the courage, to reject, though the latter alternative may have never been actually assumed. Many instances, however, are recorded of individual senators arguing upon the imperial proposition, and even condemning it, and, at least at the commencement of the Tiberian principate, it was deemed a refinement of flattery to affect such freedom of discussion. This, perhaps, is the limit to which the imperial authority extended in the matter of legislation at this period: it was practically complete, but in outward show reached only to recommendation. It must be understood, however, that the senate, in its proneness to adulation, was constantly representing itself as the devoted slave of the prince, and the mere registrar of his decrees; accepting, in short, the practice as if it were the law of the time, and satisfying its own pride and dignity by a mental reservation, to the effect that its concession to its chief was a mere voluntary cession of its undoubted prerogatives, which it might at any time resume, and which, in fact, on the death of each emperor, reverted *ipso facto* to itself, to be ceded to his successor or withheld from him at its own proper pleasure.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *epistola* or *libellus* of the princeps was recited by one of the *questores*, who was called his *candidatus*. *Digest*. i. 18. § 4.: "Ex *questoribus* quidam sunt qui *candidati Principis* dicuntur, quique *epistolas ejus* in *senatu* legunt."

<sup>2</sup> It was not, I think, till the time of the Antonines, as we shall see hereafter, that the *Oratio* or *Rescriptum* of the emperor was referred to in the same terms as a *Lex*. *Comp. Digest*. xxiii. 2. §§ 57, 58, 60.

III. In regard to criminal jurisdiction the loss of the popular assemblies was still more complete and signal, while the senate, at least in outward appearance, gained all that the people had lost. From early times there had been a certain rivalry between the two powers in respect to jurisdiction, and the mutual limit of their prerogatives on this point was not strictly defined. The people in their centuries,—the assembly in which wealth and station were most fully represented, and not merely numbers, as in the tribes,—claimed the ultimate right of deciding on the citizen's *caput*, that is, his civil status, and, at least in political cases, it was before this assembly that the chief magistrates were required to summon offenders. But, on the one hand, the comitia of the tribes encroached gradually on this prerogative; on the other, the senate claimed exclusive jurisdiction over the acts of the citizens in the provinces, and, by some irregular and unexplained usurpation, sometimes within the bounds of Italy also.<sup>1</sup> The last remnant of the supreme power originally inherent in the people, was the right of appeal to it, which was always possessed by the criminal in capital cases; though even here too the senate presumed to evade the principle of the law, by declaring in extreme cases the state in danger, and thrusting extraordinary powers in the hands of the consuls. Thus the accomplices of Catilina were brought to trial before the senate, condemned, and executed without appeal, much to their own astonishment at the vigour of the proceeding, and not without great offence to the people, or at least to their leaders. But throughout the last century of the free state the jurisdiction both of the comitia and the senate was almost completely over-ridden by the institution of the *Questiones perpetue*, the permanent or fixed tribunals, and the old con-

III. The criminal jurisdiction of the people and of the senate.

Over-ridden by the fixed tribunals.

<sup>1</sup> This jurisdiction of the senate in the provinces was a part of its administrative competence therein through its officers. Polybius asserts that in his time it had jurisdiction also within the bounds of Italy in cases of treason, conspiracy, and murder. Polyb. vi. 13.; Hoeck, i. 3. p. 68.

test between the two political bodies of the commonwealth was exchanged for a competition among its leading classes for admission to these tribunals, or a preponderance in them.

The appeal to the people was tacitly extinguished by Augustus, who reserved the right of judgment in the last resort to himself alone, in virtue perhaps of his tribunitian power, by which he was the constituted guardian, and in some sense the vicegerent

The appeal transferred from the people to the emperor.

of the tribes.<sup>1</sup> But both he and still more his next successor invited the senate to take cognisance of many offences which had hitherto been subjected to the jurisdiction of the fixed tribunals. Mæcenas, we are told, advised that all charges against senators, their wives and children, should be referred to the senate alone;

Cognisance of charges against senators.

and it has been supposed, no doubt too hastily, that the counsels popularly ascribed to this minister indicate the actual course pursued by his master.<sup>2</sup> In this case, however, it would be too much to affirm that either the first or the second princeps actually transferred from the tribunals to the senate the cognisance of all charges against members of its own body. In Piso's process, for instance, though the culprit was himself a senator, the prosecutors commence their proceedings by invoking the emperor to investigate the affair in person, and he declines the task as inconvenient rather than irregular. He goes on to say in his reply that, in remitting the affair to the judgment of the senate, he evinces his regard to the rank of Germanicus; for in a less conspicuous case the appointed tribunal for murders would have been

<sup>1</sup> The comitia of the centuries, as has been before remarked, represented the Roman people in their military character, and, therefore, were held, not in the Forum, but beyond the walls: the distinctive meaning and rights of this assembly became extinguished as the citizens ceased to constitute the military force of the republic.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lii. 31. Hoeck relies on this passage as if it were an express statement of the law or practice under Augustus. It is, however, pretty well understood, as I have elsewhere remarked, that the counsels the historian puts into the mouth of Mæcenas represent more correctly the usage of his own time, i. e. the third century.

fully competent to undertake the process.<sup>1</sup> It would appear, however, that the *Quæstiones*, though still existing, were gradually degraded from the high position they held under the republic. The senate received jurisdiction in cases not only of *Majestas* and *Repetundæ*, that is, of Treason and Extortion, but of Murder, Poisoning, Bribery, and others: and this was not confined perhaps to charges against members of its own order. A less invidious and at the same time a more brilliant prerogative of this body, however, was that of deciding upon the offences of allies and dependent sovereigns against the interests of the Roman state and its chief. This was a function which the assembly had claimed from an early period, as the executive of the Roman people abroad; nor had it ever been wrested from the senate by the *comitia*, nor transferred to any special tribunal. On the whole, the senate, from the time of the Tiberian principate, may be described as a high Court of Criminal Jurisdiction of the most comprehensive kind.

The senate under the empire becomes the chief court of criminal jurisdiction.

The Romans, consistently with their inveterate jealousy of all that savoured of monarchical authority, refused to assign the highest judicial competence to any single judge; and when the unwieldy proportions and gross unfairness of such a tribunal as that of the people themselves, assembled in their *comitia*, became no longer tolerable, they invented, in the *Quæstiones Perpetuæ*, a sort of virtual representation of themselves by standing committees. The number of members of each of these boards might vary from three or four to twenty or thirty, or even more. Charges of inferior gravity were referred to a commission, consisting nominally of a hundred members, but

Paramount jurisdiction of the emperor himself.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 12.: "Id solum Germanico super leges præstiterimus, quod in curia potius quam in foro, apud senatum quam apud iudices, de morte ejus acquiritur." An ordinary case of murder would have been tried by the *quæstores homicidii* in a basilica adjoining the Forum. The *quæstiones perpetuæ* were, by legal fiction, committees of the tribes, and the basilicas were the committee-rooms of the Forum, their place of assembly.



sometimes in reality much exceeding that number. The vital principle of the most perfect systems of modern procedure, which secures the responsibility of the judge by isolating him from the rest of the community, and bringing public opinion to bear on him from the eminence of his character and position, was abhorrent from the democratical spirit of the Romans, and the fixed idea of their polity, that truth was to be found in the decisions of a majority. These views, however, were irreconcilable with the principles of monarchy; and the emperor had, in fact, no alternative, but either to appoint special judges of eminence enough to make their decisions respected, or to become himself the controller of the decisions of a more numerous and less responsible body. From the moment that judicial competence was spread over a body of six hundred members, the concentration of actual jurisdiction in the hands of their chief became inevitable. It is of little consequence, therefore, to inquire from which of his special functions the princeps might most logically derive the judicial prerogative which was soon found to attach to him; whether it proceeded from the sovereignty of the people lodged virtually in his person; whether from the military autocracy of the imperium; or whether from the combination of the consular, the proconsular, and the tribunitian powers, each of which undoubtedly conferred jurisdiction in particular cases. Of the first of these hypotheses, it may be remarked that the sovereignty of the people was certainly not at this period directly and legitimately transferred to the emperor;<sup>1</sup> of the second, that the judicial functions of the emperor were restricted to the camp;<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Even at a much later period the basis of the imperial power assumed by Ulpian, after Gaius, is of course a mere legal fiction: "*Quod populus ei et in eum omnem suam potestatem conferat.*"

<sup>2</sup> Dion affirms (lil. 17.) that the emperor derived from his imperium the right of putting senators and knights to death within the city. This is one of many passages of this writer of the third century in which he puts the admitted usage of his own day on the footing of earlier and legitimate principles. The practice employed, as we shall see, by Tiberius himself, in the latter part

of the last, that the jurisdiction of the three magistracies above named was in each case specifically limited; nor would the combination of all together extend so far as to cover that claimed and exercised by the emperor, which was, indeed, practically unlimited. It may be admitted, however, that it was the jurisdiction of the emperor in these several capacities that gave him his ground of vantage for consolidating his more sweeping pretensions. In proportion as these powers themselves became more extensive, so did the judicial qualification they imparted become less strictly defined. The imperial prerogative of Pardon was an extension or distortion of the tribunitian right of Succour; that of revising or annulling the decrees of the senate was an exaggeration of the privilege of Intercession; and we can imagine how, when the emperor was thus raised above all legitimate principle and usage, both accused and accusers might combine to cast themselves at the foot of the throne, and solicit the arbitration of a judge from whose pre-eminence they might expect impartiality. The Romans, it must always be remembered, were to the full as impatient in thrusting irregular powers upon their ruler as he was in usurping them.<sup>1</sup> From the combination of both these impulses, the jurisdiction of the senate had become, before the death of the second princeps, entirely dependent on his direction; and whenever his interests were at stake, the judicial sentence of the fathers was no other than the expression of his will inspired by himself. In the same way, moreover, the decisions which he pronounced with his own mouth were generally merely the echoes of his private pleasure.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, except in certain outward

of his reign, was a mere usurpation of the sword, and bore no constitutional sanction. It was precisely for such usurpations as this that the acts of certain of the emperors were formally rescinded by the senate after their deaths.

<sup>1</sup> Hence the memorable expression ascribed to Tiberius himself, with regard to the Roman people: "O homines ad servitutem paratos." The sentiment was no doubt commonly in men's mouths. So Cæsar in Lucan: "Detrahimus dominos urbi servire paratos." *Phars.* i. 851.

<sup>2</sup> See Hoeck, l. 3. 68.; citing Suet. *Tib.* 60. 62.; Tac. *Ann.* iii. 70.

show, and the popular estimation thereto attaching, the senate derived little or no advantage from its apparent triumph over the people in the matter of jurisdiction. In this as in other respects it was the mere passive instrument of the emperor's will, and its character became insensibly degraded by the consciousness that all its magnificent pretensions were no better than empty shadows. With a set of high-sounding formulas ever in its mouth, it was, in fact, only blowing bubbles for the amusement of a frivolous populace.—

Such was the process by which the three sovereign rights of the Roman people were gradually taken from them and transferred in name to the rival body of the senate, but in fact to the emperor himself. Henceforth it depended on the personal character of the chief whether the government of Rome assumed or not the appearance of that autocratic despotism which it really was, however the fact might be disguised. As regarded the right of jurisdiction, Tiberius continued for the most part to maintain the principle of administration which he had asserted from the first, that of using the senate as the ostensible instrument of his government. He refrained generally, as in Piso's process, from assuming judicial powers himself, and referred all suitors for his decision to the great assembly of the state. This moderation sufficed to satisfy the mass of his subjects. The reform of the rights of election caused but a slight murmur among the people from whom they were finally withdrawn;<sup>1</sup> the abolition of their legislative and judicial competence was accepted without a sign of mortification. The populace of Rome had bidden farewell to all its political interests, and it is only from their connexion with politics that the rights of legislation and jurisdiction are ever interesting to the great body of a nation. The senate itself was flattered by the appearance of a victory over the rivals with whom it had waged such long and dubious warfare.

Supremacy of  
the emperor in  
election, legis-  
lation, and ju-  
risdiction.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 15.: "Neque populus ademptum jus questus est nisi inani rumore."

It might amuse itself with the idea that it had found compensation for the disasters of Pharsalia and Philippi, and that the chiefs who had been borne to power on the shoulders of the popular party had been compelled, even in the moment of their elevation, to negotiate the support of the power which they had worsted in the field. But the princeps had in fact got the senate completely under his influence. The powers of the censure alone, the highest and most venerable perhaps of any functions of administration, gave him, under the fairest disguise, a direct means of controlling it. The sum of twelve hundred thousand sesterces being fixed as the qualification for a place in the assembly, the emperor encouraged men of birth, whose fortunes had fallen below this standard, to apply to him for an increase of means; at the same time he took care to let them feel, by an occasional repulse, accompanied with harsh observations, how mere a matter of favour such an indulgence would be. After aiding, as it was styled, the census of several of the body, his rejection of the petition of a pauper senator named Hortalus, a grandson of the illustrious Hortensius, caused considerable dismay. How the wealth accumulated by that busy advocate had been dissipated, does not appear; but already under the principate of Augustus, Hortalus had received a pecuniary gratification, to enable him to marry and rear a family, and maintain the honours of his historic house. Still, however, was he haunted by the demon of poverty. Rising in his place in the senate-house, at the open doors of which he had stationed his four sons, and turning himself on the one hand to the bust of Hortensius, conspicuous among the images which adorned the hall, on the other to that of Augustus, he addressed a speech to Tiberius, entreating him, in the names of both, to afford him the succour he required. But whether from a settled policy of degrading the representative of a great republican name, or from personal dislike, or, as Tacitus insinuates, merely from a spirit of surly opposition to the inclination of the senators around

The emperor's control over the senate through the powers of the censorship.

Petition of a pauper senator.

him, Tiberius not only rejected the application, but rebuked it as presumptuous and importunate. *The divine Augustus*, he said, *gave you money spontaneously, without solicitation, nor did he mean to bind himself or me to repeat the same liberality on all occasions.* He consented, however, to gratify the senate by making a trifling present to the children; after which he made no further effort to save the rapid decline and degradation of their house.<sup>1</sup>

This control over the senate was still further assured by the right of its princeps to convene it at his own pleasure on extraordinary occasions, as well as to prorogue its ordinary sittings. If he could not legitimately require it to affirm every proposition he placed before it, he was enabled at least to defeat at once any motion that was disagreeable to himself, either by dissolving the assembly, or even by putting his veto upon the transaction. The utmost liberty it continued to possess extended not to acts, but merely to language, if the indistinct murmurs and interjectional sarcasms which were occasionally heard within its walls could be dignified with such an appellation. But every such indication of independent opinion, however disguised and smothered, was watched with a jealousy which the substance of power never allowed to slumber, and the law of *Majestas* or Treason, which Tiberius brandished over the heads of his counsellors, was an instrument of flexible and searching application for unveiling their hidden sentiments, no less than for controlling their conduct.

*Majestas*, according to the Ovidian apologue, was the daughter of Dignity and Respect, who first after the dispersion of primeval chaos taught the rules of courtesy to the rude and undisciplined divinities. Ages rolled away, and when the Giants rose in

The emperor's control over the senate by the law of *Majestas*.

Origin of the law of *Majestas*.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 37, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Ovid, *Fast.* v. 23.:

“Donec Honos placidoque decens Reverentia vultu  
Corpora legitimis imposuere toris.”

arms to restore universal anarchy, Jove overthrew them with his bolts, and defended the majesty of the gods, never again to be presumptuously assailed. Hence, she ever sits beside him; she cherishes and protects him; the awe inspired by her influence makes his sceptre to be obeyed without force of arms. She has descended also upon the earth. Romulus and Numa acknowledged and adored her; nor less did their successors, each in his own generation. She it is that makes our fathers and mothers to be respected; she attends upon our youths; she protects our virgins; she commends to the consul his fasces and ivory chair; finally, she rides aloft on the laurelled chariot of the emperor.' Such was the language by which a flatterer of Augustus might divert the imagination of his countrymen from the idea of the abstract majesty of law and constitutional principle, to that of the glory which surrounded the person of the ruler; from the recollection of kings and consuls to the contemplation of the emperor himself, over whom all the ensigns of office were suspended. Under the empire the law of majesty was the legal protection thrown round the person of the chief of the state: any attempt against the dignity or safety of the community became an attack on its glorified representative. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that the first legal enactment which received this title, half a century before the foundation of the empire, was actually devised for the protection, not of the state itself, but of a personage dear to the state, namely, the tribune of the people. Treason to the state indeed had long before been known, and defined as *Perduellio*, the levying of war against the commonwealth. Laws on this subject had existed from the time of the kings. But the crime of majesty was first specified by the demagogue Apuleius, in an enactment of the

The lex Apuleia, A. U. 654.

Honot and Reverentia are correlatives: the one is the honourable station or office, the other the respect due to it.

Ovid, l. c.:

" Illa datos fasces commendat, eburque curule;  
 Illa coronatis alta triumphat equis."

year 654, for the purpose of guarding or exalting the dignity of the champion of the plebs. Any attempt against the prerogatives of this popular officer was declared to be an assault on the greatness and dignity of the commonwealth itself: to detract from the majesty of the tribune was an offence which the new law smote with the penalties of treason.<sup>1</sup>

The law of Apuleius was followed by that of another tribune, Varius, conceived in a similar spirit. But it was the object of Sulla, in the ample and methodized scope of his Cornelian constitution, to withdraw the definition of majesty from a mere offence against public officers, to attempts on the general interests of the commonwealth. The dictator conceived and embodied, in the spirit of a proud republican, the noble sentiment of a patriot of our own, that *There is on earth a far diviner thing, Veiled though it be, than parliament or king.* He recalled men's minds from the vulgar personifications to which democracy naturally inclines, to the higher abstractions of an enlightened political wisdom. The distinction between Majestas and Perduellio henceforth vanishes: the crime of Treason is specifically extended from acts of violence to measures calculated to bring the state into contempt. It is made to include not only acts of commission, but many cases of the neglect or imperfect performance of duty.<sup>2</sup> It is now majestas in a public officer, not only if he

<sup>1</sup> Among the numerous treatises upon this subject I have particularly referred to some chapters in the work of Rein, on the Criminal Law of the Romans. He assigns the date of the lex Apuleia to 654 v. c., not 652. The personal application of the law appears in a passage of Cicero (*De Invent.* ii. 17.): "Majestatem minuisti quod tribunum pl. de templo deduxisti;" but the more general definition of the crime is given in the *Ad Herenn.* ii. 12.: "Majestatem is minuit, qui ea tollit, ex quibus civitatis amplitudo constat." Again, the two branches of the crime are combined in one view (*De Invent.* ii. 17.): "Majestatem minuere est, de dignitate, aut amplitudine, aut potestate populi, aut eorum quibus populus potestatem dedit, aliquid derogare:" or once more, "Aliquid de re publica, quum potestatem non habeas, administrare." Rein, *Crim.-Recht der Römer*, p. 509.

<sup>2</sup> Thus on the words of Cicero against Verres (2 *Verr.* i. 32.), "Quid im-

wages war without due authority from the state, or betrays his trust to the enemy, or fomented sedition among the citizens or mutiny among the soldiers; but if he shrinks from asserting to the full the prerogative of his office, whether military or civil, or forbears to deliver his prisoners to the proper authorities for punishment or ransom.<sup>1</sup> To remove or overthrow a monument of the glory of the commonwealth, such as a statue or a trophy, might afford ground for a charge of this nature, as wounding the pride of the nation or touching its honour.<sup>2</sup>

The motive for Cæsar's legislation on the subject of *majestas*, in which he went further into details than Sulla, but in no respect diverged from his principles, was no other perhaps than a determination to obliterate every monument of the usurpation of the senate, and its redoubted dictator. Cæsar was the hereditary antagonist of Sulla, and, to complete the full cycle of his rivalry, it was necessary that he should emulate his predecessor in legislation as well as in arms and administration. The chief provisions of the *lex Julia* on this subject have been pre-

The *lex Julia*  
de *Majestate*.

served to us by the jurists of the later empire; but we are not perhaps quite competent to decide how far the law, as it came from Julius himself, was modified by his next successors. It is still a disputed point whether Augustus promulgated any distinct *lex Julia* of his own upon *Majestas*, though there is no question that in some respects he extended the law of his predecessor, including in his definition the publication of written pasquinades against the emperor, as an indirect mode of bringing the person of the ruler into

*minuisti jus legationis*," the Pseudo-Asconius remarks (Orell. p. 182.): "*Qui potestatem suam in administrando non defenderit, imminuti magistratus veluti majestatis læse reus est.*"

<sup>1</sup> Cæsar's juvenile act of audacity in punishing his captive pirates, and refusing to deliver them to his superior officer, was a defiance of the Cornelian law of *Majestas*. See above, ch. iiii.

<sup>2</sup> This is one of the charges Cicero brings against Verres (2 *Verr.* iv. 41.), of which he affirms, "*Est majestatis quod imperii nostri gloriæ rerumque publicarum monumenta evertere atque asportare ausus est.*"



contempt, and smoothing the way for disaffection and resistance. This is perhaps the only trace of any desire on the part of the two first emperors to give the law a special application for their own protection; and even in the Cornelian law some provision seems to have been made to check the licence of railing against the constituted authorities.<sup>1</sup>

It will be important, for the just appreciation of later usage in respect to this grave offence, the highest, except sacrilege, known to the Roman law, to place before our eyes a comprehensive sketch of the Julian enactments regarding

it. *Majestas*, then, was defined to be injury to the state:—1., in respect of its public enemies, as

by the surrender of cities or persons, the abetting or assisting them in their enterprises, desertion to them, cowardice in action against them, and the like: 2., in respect of its internal constitution, as by illicit combinations, clubs, and conspiracies, or more openly by sedition and riot: 3., in respect of its officers, as when one magistrate encroached on the functions of another, or withheld from his successor the forces of his province, or released a criminal from punishment, or made war without public authority; or, again, where one compassed the death of a public officer, or wrested from him his prerogatives: 4., from the falsification of the public documents.—It was necessary to the establishment of the crime to prove the criminal intention; but the attempt was held to be equally obnoxious to the law as the act itself, and the accomplice by aid or counsel was amenable to the same punishment as the principal.<sup>2</sup> This punishment was simple and uniform. It consisted in the interdiction of fire and water, which was practically equivalent to banishment, and was attended with confiscation of property, being

<sup>1</sup> Cic. *ad Div.* iii. 11.: "Et si Sulla voluit ne in quemvis impune declamare iiceret."

<sup>2</sup> See Rein (*Criminal-Recht*, pp. 518–528.), chiefly from the writings of the jurists. Tacitus (*Ann.* i. 72.) states the principle of the law: "Si quis prodicione exercitum aut plebem seditionibus, denique male gesta re publica majestatem populi Romani minuisset: facta arguebantur, dicta impune erant."

the same penalty which attached to the more ancient crime of perduellio.<sup>1</sup> The trial of charges of this kind was regularly reserved for one of the special tribunals. During the brief period of Cæsar's power it does not appear that this tribunal was ever called into action. Trials for majesty were few even under the long principate of his successor. Augustus carefully abstained from the employment of an engine which he well knew must, from the nature of things, tend to fix in men's minds a sharp distinction between the chief of the state and the state itself. The sacredness which attached to the tribunitian office, now vested in himself, could not fail to raise the person of the ruler above the abstract ideas of constitutional principle; but he was anxious not to hasten the moment when the people of Rome should regard the law of treason merely as a device for their ruler's security. He felt himself protected by other and stronger safeguards; while the chief danger of his position actually lay in the risk of his disguise being torn too rudely from him.

Reserve of Augustus in its application.

It has been already shown how the natural policy of Tiberius pointed in another direction. The second princeps required special guarantees for his security. Accordingly, from the very commencement of his reign, we mark a change in popular opinion, which he fostered and encouraged. The person

Under Tiberius protection demanded for the person of the emperor.

of the emperor begins now to be the great subject of the law of treason: though not formally so pronounced, the idea that the emperor is himself the state begins to predominate in the national feeling over every other. The emperor is now in the world what the gods are in Olympus, a being to be revered and feared simply for himself, without regard to his attributes, or the qualities he may be supposed to embody. Attempts on his life become heinous deeds, only to

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 50.: "Bonis amissis aqua et igni arceatur: quod perinde censeo ac si lege majestatis teneretur." Comp. iii. 38. 68., iv. 42.; Paulus, v. 39. l.

be compared with sacrilege against the blessed divinitia. Not only such overt acts, however, but any conduct or language which could be construed into the compassing of his death, became involved in the crime and penalties of treason. Rome was full of soothsayers or magicians, who pretended, by casting horoscopes or evoking dead men's spirits, to communicate a knowledge of future events. By playing on the credulous cupidity of heirs or fortune-hunters, these impostors acquired wealth and consideration. In the age of Catullus, a wicked parent might *wish* for the death of his son, or the son disclaim all sorrow for the loss of his parent: but in the next generation Ovid could represent the guilty spendthrift as *inquiring into the years* of the sire who stands between himself and fortune.<sup>1</sup> To inquire thus into the years of the emperor, to explore, that is, the secret of his destined term of life, was now reputed treasonable: there must be, it was argued, some stronger motive for such an inquiry than mere indecent curiosity: the man who sought to ascertain beforehand the day of the emperor's doom must have some illicit interest in the dire event; he must cherish the hopes of a traitor in his heart.<sup>2</sup> Not only pasquinades and injurious publications of every kind directed against the emperor were now comprehended in the qualification of majestas, but also abusive and insulting language, which Augustus had so magnanimously tolerated. The two first Cæsars, and generally the best and wisest of their successors, allowed ample licence to the tongue, in the freedom of which the Romans continued to demand indulgence long after they had sur-

<sup>1</sup> Compare, among the signs of human degeneracy in Catullus, liv. 401.:

"Destitit extinctos natus lugere parentes:

Optavit genitor primævi funera nati . . . ."

with Ovid, *Metam.* i. 148.:

"Filius ante diem patrios inquiri in annos."

<sup>2</sup> Paulus, v. 21. 3.: "Qui de salute principis vel de summa reipublice mathematicos . . . . consulit, cum eo qui responderit capite punitur." Tertull. *Apo.* 35.: "Cui opus est perscrutari super Cæsaris salute, nisi a quo aliquid adversus illum cogitatur vel optatur aut post illum speratur et sustinetur?"

rendered all independence of action.<sup>1</sup> This licence of language was fostered by the manner of their education. We have seen how they were brought up from childhood as gladiators in the arena of debate and declamation: fence of tongue was the weapon with which they were to maintain against every assailant their honour, their fortunes, and their lives. Readiness of speech and ease in the handling of the weapons of retort and sarcasm were carried from the schools of rhetoric to the tribunals of the forum, and again from the places of their public exercise to the private assembly or banquet. Scurrility of language was indeed characteristic of the Italians, and was common to all classes: it extended from the senators and knights to the lowest of the populace; it startled alike the decorum of patrician nuptials and enlivened the humours of the Saturnalia. The coarse ribaldry of the Fescennine farces embodied the same spirit of unbounded personality which glows in the polished sentences of Cicero, or flashes from the point of an epigram of Catullus. According to Roman habits of thought, and agreeably perhaps to the theory of the Roman polity, the private life and habits of the citizen were as much the property of his fellow-countrymen as his conduct in public affairs. His domestic vices were charged as crimes against society, and an accusation of bribery or extortion was habitually introduced by a pretended exposure of sins of lewdness or intemperance. This licence of defamation

Licence of language in use among the Romans.

<sup>1</sup> The laws of the twelve tables had specified defamatory writings, or publication generally, as one kind of *Injuria*; but the excessive severity of the penalty, which was no less than death, seems to show that the crime was not practically visited at all. The disuse of this process gave occasion for the prætors to issue notices against libel in their edicts, and one or two cases occur, under the free state, of actions for slander, for satirical writings, or misrepresentations on the stage. Fines and civil infamy were the penalties now attached to this offence. Sulla, and after him Augustus, legislated specifically upon the subject of the *famosi libelli*; confining themselves, however, to writings only, and allowing full licence to merely oral abuse. For the proceedings of Augustus, see Suet. *Oct.* 51.; Tac. *Ann.* i. 72. See this subject fully discussed by Rein, pp. 354-388.

was the birthright of the free Roman, of which he was often more jealous than of his independence in thought and action. He might subject himself to the arbitrary authority of a tribune or a dictator without a murmur, as long as he was permitted to retort upon them with jests and scandalous anecdotes. No government could maintain itself on the basis of popular opinion without repressing these extravagant excesses. When the chief of the state was raised to an eminence from which he could not descend into the arena of personal controversy, it became a necessary act of policy to restrain the licence of attack by measures of adequate severity.<sup>1</sup>

Two accounts are given us of the provocation which induced Augustus to extend or restore the laws against defamatory writings. On the one hand, we are told that he was offended by the licentiousness of a writer named Cassius Severus, who lashed the most illustrious of the citizens of both sexes indiscriminately.<sup>2</sup>

Conduct of Augustus and Tiberius with respect to injurious language.

We may infer, therefore, from this statement, that the emperor now afforded the protection of the law to women as well as to men, which was probably a novelty; at least, the principle of the original laws of libel was founded on the civil dignity of the citizen, to which a woman could lay no claim.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, it is stated that he was moved to this course by an attack made on himself by Junius Novatus, a partisan of the unfortunate Agrippa. If this be true, the confirmation of the law must have been among the latest acts of the aged emperor's reign.<sup>4</sup> In either case, it does not appear that the first princeps gave himself any other protection

<sup>1</sup> On one occasion Augustus threatened to retort: "*Faciam sciat Ælianus et me linguam habere; plura enim de eo loquar:*" but he abstained nevertheless from committing himself to the unequal encounter. *Suet. Oct.* 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Tac. Ann.* i. 72: "*Commotus Cassii Severi libidine qui viros fœminasque illustres procacibus scriptis diffamaverat.*"

<sup>3</sup> *Injuria* was anything which unfavourably affected the public estimation of a citizen, and consequently his power of serving the state. But Augustus treated Defamation not as *Injuria*, but as *Majestas*, the greater scope of which enabled him to throw the shield of the law over illustrious women also.

<sup>4</sup> *Suet. Oct.* i. c.

in this particular than what he allowed to every citizen. As regarded himself, he is said to have been very mild in prosecuting or punishing this offence, and to have refused to inquire at all into mere oral invectives.<sup>1</sup> Very different, however, was the conduct in this respect of his uneasy successor. The awkward and ungenial manners of Tiberius had been an early subject of ill-natured remark: he was already accused of gross intemperance, against which many pungent epigrams were directed.<sup>2</sup> But as he rose in eminence and power, the attacks on him assumed a more serious form, impugning his character as a ruler, imputing to him cruelty beyond the law, and a pride indecent even in the first of the citizens. The free insinuation of disagreement between the prince and his mother might lead to inconvenient revelations of his domestic privacy.<sup>3</sup> When on his first accession to power his pleasure was taken by the prætor about

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Oct.* 55. He contented himself, according to this writer, with contradicting by proclamation some of these attacks, and forbade the senate to prohibit by a decree the introduction of posthumous abuse of the emperor in wills. But Dion (*lvi.* 27.) says that he caused some libels against him to be burnt, and punished the writers.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 42. The supposed fragment quoted by Burmann is in fact this passage of Suetonius versified:

“Exinde plebs Quiritium vocavit  
Non Claudium Tiberium Neronem,  
Sed Caldium Biberium Meronem.”

Comp. Suet. *Tib.* 59.:

“Fastidit vinum quia jam sitit iste cruorem;  
Tam bibit hunc avidè quam bibit ante merum.”

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 72: “Hunc quoque asperavere carmina, incertis auctoribus vulgata, in sævitiam superbiàmque ejus, et discordem cum matre animum.” We may conceive the effect on prince and people of such an epigram as the following placarded on the walls of a modern European capital:

“Aspice feliciem sibi non tibi, Romule, Sullam:  
Et Marium si vis aspice, sed reducem:  
Nec non Antoni civilia bella moventis,  
Nec semel infectas aspice cæde manus:  
Et dic, Roma perit: regnabit sanguine multo  
Ad regnum quisquis venit ab exsilio.”

the appointment of the special commission for *Majestas*, he evaded the question with a general reply. He did not intend to allow these cases to fall under the jurisdiction of an independent tribunal, but to reserve them for the cognisance of his own instrument, the senate; or perhaps at this time he had not really determined what course he should pursue. At first he met such accusations with a magnanimity worthy of a great monarch: *Let them hate me*, he was heard to exclaim, *as long as in their hearts they respect me; in a free state, he added, both mind and tongue should be free:* but unfortunately he could not maintain this elevation of sentiment, and the bitterness with which he presently revenged himself on his detractors was supposed to prove that the charges against him were pointed with the fatal sting of truth.<sup>1</sup>

When, however, it once became known that the new princeps was jealous of his estimation in the minds of the citizens, and would not suffer himself or his position to be disparaged by railing defamation, there were many to urge him forwards, and impel him beyond the bounds he may have originally prescribed to himself. It was impossible to maintain any clear distinction between the guilt of written and merely spoken libels. It might be said, indeed, that the one admitted of direct proof, while the other could only be prosecuted on the precarious ground of hearsay evidence; or that the one argued deliberate intention, the other might be a momentary ebullition of thoughtless spleen; or, lastly, that the one was a crime recognized by the ancient laws, the other was not less expressly countenanced by them as a privilege of the Roman freeman. But all these considerations gave way, and not unjustly, to the conviction that the malice might be the same, the injury equal in either case, and that common sense and equity demanded that they should both be brought under

Crime of Majesty extended from writings to words.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 42.: "Oderint dum probent: dein vera certa que esse ipse fecit fidem." 28.: "In civitate libera linguam mentemque liberas esse debere."

the same category of crime. Tiberius was encouraged, not by courtiers only, but by jurists and philosophers, in extending the definition of majesty from writings to words; and in so doing, he only carried out a sound and reasonable principle. But this was not all. It was easy to see that there might be many other ways of bringing the person of the sovereign into contempt, besides either writings or words. The same jurists who could not blind themselves to the logical sequence from one of these to the other, were at a loss to distinguish from them a variety of actions, some monstrous and many merely ridiculous. Thus Falanius, a knight of obscure position, was accused of disrespect to the princeps, amounting to the guilt of treason, inasmuch as he had admitted a low and profligate actor to assist in celebrating the rites of the deified Augustus. Another of the same

Constructive  
majesty.  
Case of Fala-  
nius and Ru-  
brinus.

A. D. 15.  
A. U. 768.

class, named Rubrius, was charged with having forsworn himself in the name of that illustrious divinity, and again, of allowing, at the sale of a villa, the sacred image to be sold along with it. It was pretended that disrespect towards the deceased Cæsar was an injury to his living successor. But Tiberius refused to subscribe to this doctrine. He wrote a letter to the consuls in favour of the accused, asserting that Livia herself, in exhibiting games in her husband's honour, had not deemed it requisite to inquire into the life and manners of all the professional people she employed; adding that perjury in the name of Augustus was no more a subject for human laws than the violation of an oath to Jupiter; and ending with the memorable aphorism, profane perhaps in the mouth of any one not himself next of kin to divinity, that the gods should be left to mind their own honour.<sup>1</sup> About the same time a man of higher rank and character, named Granus Marcellus, apparently a con-

Case of Granus  
Marcellus.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 73.: "Jusjurandum perinde æstimandum quam si Jovem fo-  
sellisset: Deorum injuriæ Dis curæ."



accused by an officer of his own staff of having uttered in conversation some reflections on the emperor's personal habits; a charge which, we are assured, it was impossible to refute, so strong was the presumption against any man of having remarked on the profligacy which was notorious to all the world. But a more specific charge against the prætor was that of having placed his own effigy in a higher and more conspicuous place than those of the Cæsars, which, as remotely connected with his family, adorned the hall of his mansion: it was even suggested, as an impious flattery at which the emperor's modesty would revolt, that he had removed the head from an image of Augustus, and replaced it with that of his living successor. In this case also Tiberius rebuked the officious zeal of the prosecutor. The culprit was acquitted of the charge of treason; but he happened to lie at the time under a charge of extortion in his province, and on this the senate was permitted to condemn him.<sup>1</sup>

But of all the charges of this nature now preferred, none was more extravagant than that against Lutorius Priscus, a knight who had obtained great success with some verses he had composed on the death of Germanicus. Tiberius himself, relaxing from his usual reserve and parsimony, had rewarded the well-timed compliment with an imperial largess. On the occasion of an illness which occurred to Drusus, the poet was tempted to try the fortune of his muse again, and prepared a second dirge, in anticipation of a second demise in the Cæsarean family. Drusus recovered; but the author's vanity prevailed over prudence and propriety, and he recited his verses before a fashionable audience. The matter became noised abroad, an information was laid against the culprit, and on the motion of Haterius, a consul designate, the senate condemned him to death as guilty of speculating on a Cæsar's death, and therefore, by an easy inference, of compassing it by wishes and prayers. Of the senators two only ventured to excuse him

Case of Luto-  
rius Priscus.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 74.

on the ground of thoughtlessness and levity: exile they would have regarded as sufficient punishment for a fault which could hardly be expected to find imitators. But their representations were unavailing. The wretched man was dragged to prison and immediately strangled. Tiberius, who was absent from Rome at the time, was mortified at this sanguinary proceeding, and still more, perhaps, at the indecent haste with which it had been conducted. Refraining from any direct censure of Haterius, or the senate generally, he contented himself with praising the sentiments of the more merciful minority, and decreed that henceforth an interval of ten days should always elapse between sentence and execution, to leave room for the exercise of pardon. This considerate provision continued in force not only during the government of Tiberius, but under his successors also.<sup>1</sup>

But the senate pretended, in its servile adulation, to grieve at the restraint which the emperor thus imposed on its headlong zeal in defence of his dignity. A knight named Ennius was soon afterwards denounced for having melted down an image of the emperor, and converted it into plate for the service of the table. On this occasion Tiberius peremptorily forbade proceedings to be instituted. Thereupon, Ateius Capito, now grown grey in reputation as the most eminent jurist of his times, assumed the tone of injured liberty, and complained that the fathers should be debarred from the free exercise of their undoubted right of judgment: the crime, he declared, was a grave one, and however mild he might be in avenging a private wrong, he for one could not suffer the majesty of the republic to be assailed with impunity. Tiberius knew the man, the hoary apologist for the Cæsarean usurpation,

Case of Ennius.

A. D. 22.  
A. U. 775.

<sup>1</sup> For the story of Lutorius Priscus, see Tac. *Ann.* iii. 49-51., under the date A. U. 774. A. D. 21. Dion (in lvii. 15.) relates that a certain Vibius Rufus prided himself on possessing two great curiosities, the relict of Cicero, and the chair in which Cæsar was slain, as if the one could make him an orator, and the other an emperor; and seems to think it showed great moderation in Tiberius to overlook such a treasonable imagination.

and could appreciate at its proper value this empty show of zeal for independence. He paid no regard to the objection, but persisted in his interference; not displeased at the jealousy with which the jurist was henceforth more generally regarded, who thus disgraced his own name, and degraded in the eyes of the citizens the dignity of his science.<sup>1</sup>

Such, indeed, was the proneness of the senate to this mode of flattery, that no public charge against an illustrious citizen seems to have been thought complete, unless coupled with the imputation of disrespect towards the emperor.<sup>2</sup> Thus about the same time we hear of Silanus, proconsul of Asia, being accused of extortion; but no sooner was the impeachment set forth, than a consular, an ædile, and a prætor started up with some other vague charges against him, as that he had *profaned the divinity of Augustus, and disparaged the majesty of Tiberius*. In the trial which followed, the emperor seems to have disdained to take notice of these accessory incriminations. The case against Silanus was sufficiently clear. He had not the courage or the eloquence to defend himself, but threw himself despairingly on the imperial clemency, and the dignity of his own family, for protection. Tiberius, however, fortified by the conduct of Augustus in a case of similar guilt, and glad to gratify the popular sentiment by making an example of so noble a culprit, encouraged the senate to proceed to sentence against him; and when it decreed the punishment of relegation to an island, interfered only to mitigate the penalty by naming Cythera as the place of confinement, instead of the more inhospitable rock of Gyarus.<sup>3</sup>

Tiberius had exhibited similar magnanimity in two previous cases, which are reserved to be mentioned together,

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 38.: "Postulaverat repetundis, addito majestatis crimine, quod tum omnium accusationum complementum erat."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 66-69.

because they relate to women; for political charges against women were a new feature in Roman procedure. Apuleia Varilia was a connexion of the imperial family, being a granddaughter of Octavia; as such, the crime of adultery, with which she was charged, became an offence against the law of Majesty. But to enhance her guilt, expressions of disrespect towards Augustus and Tiberius, and even against Livia, were imputed to her. Upon the first and principal charge the emperor was satisfied with referring the prosecutors to the Julian law of adultery: he refused to listen to the charge of disrespect towards himself and his mother; the insinuation of an offence against the sanctity of Augustus he would alone permit to be made the subject of inquiry. This last charge speedily fell to the ground; but the licentiousness of an illustrious matron, which was amply proved, was punished with removal beyond the two hundredth milestone.<sup>1</sup> Nearly similar to this was the case of Lepida, who combined with her Æmilian ancestry a connexion with the Sullan and Pompeian houses, and who was esteemed of sufficient political importance to be subjected to charges of adultery and poisoning, aggravated by inquiries through the soothsayers into the destinies of the imperial family. In this instance, also, we find Tiberius exercising great moderation in regard to the charges which affected himself; first desiring the senate to dismiss them altogether; and when it persisted, forbidding the examination of the culprit's slaves against her. She was ultimately convicted on the other accusations, and interdicted fire and water; but even then, the confiscation of her estates, which should properly have followed, was remitted.<sup>2</sup>

Such was the moderation of Tiberius for several years from the commencement of his reign, in the defence of his own person and position; such was the difficulty in which he was placed by the overweening zeal of flatterers, and still more by the ambition or

Case of Apuleia  
and Lepida.

A. D. 17.  
A. D. 20.

The injustice  
Tiberius has  
done to his own  
reputation.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. ii. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. iii. 22, 23.

cupidity of senators, who sought distinction or profit from the trade of criminal accusation. Tiberius himself, besides the desire he manifested for the attainment of substantial justice, was admitted on all hands to be free from the sordid vices so common among his countrymen. He was, to use the strong but rough expression of Tacitus, *firm enough against money*.<sup>1</sup> But if he has failed in other respects to obtain from history all the justice he sought to obtain for his people, the cause lay partly in himself, and in the peculiar infirmity into which his excess of zeal betrayed him. The mind of Tiberius was characterized by a certain painful preciseness: he was possessed with the litigious spirit which insists on its presumed rights, in spite of every inconvenience. He was deficient in breadth of view, and sought in vain to compensate for it by subtlety and acuteness. Accordingly, we are not surprised to find that the general and statesman, the chief of innumerable armies, and the head of a confederacy of nations, was moreover a purist in his use of language, and fond of disputing with the grammarians on the exact meaning of words, full of notes and queries on the most trifling and puerile subjects of literary curiosity, in which certainly truth could not be attained, and as certainly was not worth attaining.<sup>2</sup> Tiberius carried in short to the throne the temper of a pedant, and a pedant on the throne is in danger of becoming a tyrant. Hence the encouragement he unfortunately gave to the criminal informers, or delators; an encouragement which he soon acknowledged to be pernicious, and withdrew in dismay, till the distrust and apprehensions of increasing years drove him again into the same fatal course. The delator was properly one who gave notice to the fiscal officers of moneys that had

His encouragement of the delators or criminal informers.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 18.: "Satis firmus adversum pecuniam."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 70.: "Affectatione et morositate nimia obscurabat styllum . . . monopolium nominaturus prius veniam postulavit." Dion (*lvii.* 15.) says that he suffered a project of law to drop rather than use a Greek word for which there was no Latin equivalent. Comp. also, the story of Capito, in *lvii.* 17., and Suet. *de Illustr. Gramm.* 22.

become due to the treasury of the state, or more strictly to the emperor's fiscus.<sup>1</sup> The title was first extended from this narrow sphere to persons who lodged information in case of any offences punishable by fine; and when Augustus undertook to legislate comprehensively on the subject of marriage, its obligations and its violations, he was induced, by the great difficulty of executing the provisions of an unpopular enactment, to subsidize by pecuniary rewards informers against its transgressors.<sup>2</sup> It was the aim of Augustus to attach every citizen to some peculiar branch of industry: wherever he could he gave direct occupation; in many other cases he indirectly pointed out where it might be found. He now called into existence a new employment, though he did not himself live to see its progress and development. Many were the knights and senators who now learnt to make a traffic of their eloquence and accomplishments, in the service of the emperor, by the vindication of his unpopular laws. They reaped their reward not in money only,—though a portion of the pecuniary mulct fell regularly to their share, and the senate not rarely decreed them a special remuneration,—but in political distinction also, and even in a notoriety akin to fame. Their love of power was amply gratified, when they saw the criminal, a man perhaps of the noblest birth and highest position, quail before their well-known energy and audacity, and desist from a hopeless contest with their acknowledged powers of persuasion. Feared by the great, they became the patrons and champions of the people, who were always ready to behold in the attack on noble offenders a vindication of popular rights and principles. They acquired in the forum some portion of the consideration which attached of old to the sturdy independence of the tribunes, while they were thrust into the favour and confidence of the princeps, or at least of his nearest advisers in the

<sup>1</sup> See Rein, *Criminal-Recht*, p. 814, note.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 28.: "Inditi custodes, et lege Papia Poppææ præmiis inducti."

palace. The trade of the delator became thus, under bad emperors, the broad and beaten track of a crafty ambition.<sup>1</sup>

But this infamous practice became so marked a feature in Roman society, and affected so painfully the imaginations of the people, that it will be well to spend a few moments here in depicting to ourselves its action more widely. We must trace it back, like every other pest of the imperial times, to its first origin under the republic, when the evil inherent in its principle was disguised or even ennobled by loftier aims, and by the freshness of its growth in an atmosphere of freedom. The liberty of the Roman citizen, the prime jewel of his existence, was to be maintained at any price. It was maintained by a system of universal terrorism. Every citizen was invited to watch over the conduct of his compatriots, and to menace every deviation from the path of civil virtue with a public accusation. Every young noble was trained in the art of pleading, partly to enable him, when his own turn came, to defend himself, but primarily to furnish him with weapons of offence, and thereby with the means of self-advancement. Rhetoric was an instrument of power, by which he might expect to make himself admired by the people, and feared by competitors of his own class. He fought his way to public honours on the floor of the law-courts, dragging successively from their benches the tribunes, the prætors, and the consuls, before whom he first began his career of eloquence. The intrigues and treasons of the men in power did not always suffice to furnish victims for this mania of impeachment: it was necessary to extend the inquisition into the provinces, and summon before the bar of Roman opinion the governors who had sinned, if not against the laws of the republic against those at least of humanity and justice. To interest the citizens, to inflame their passions, to bias their judgments on the subject of crimes thus perpetrated on remote provin-

<sup>1</sup> On the rewards of the delators, see Suet. *Tib.* 61.; Dion, *lviii.* 14.; Tac. *Ann.* *ii.* 32., *iv.* 30., *vi.* 47.

cials, required great exertion of art and eloquence; but the genius and industry of the young advocates and their teachers kept pace with every demand upon them. Feelings of party were appealed to in the place of genuine patriotism. The truth of the accusation became of little importance; it was the great triumph of the rhetorician, not unfrequently gained to baffle the interests of a political faction, without regard to the intrinsic merits of the case. The young orator, who at the age of nineteen or twenty could sway the votes of a bench of judges against some veteran proconsul, grown grey in the service of the state, was marked as sure to rise to the highest political eminence.<sup>1</sup> The energy and aggressive spirit of the Romans was ever conspicuous in the toga no less than in the sagum; they preferred the attack to the defence, in the forum as well as in the field.

It was the glory of Cicero that he abstained in his early career, while yet his fame was to be acquired, from this common routine of prosecution, and sought the less dazzling career of a pleader for the accused. Yet in the most glowing of his effusions, both in public and private causes, he appears as the assailant; and neither humanity nor policy prevent him from declaring himself the enemy of the man against whom he seeks to enlist his hearers' prejudices.<sup>2</sup> The Romans made no scruple of avowing their personal animosities; the spirit of revenge with them was a virtue which a man would affect if he had it not.<sup>3</sup> In the heart of the Roman friendship

The want, under the empire, of great and interesting topics for eloquence.

<sup>1</sup> Thus Crassus maintained an accusation at nineteen years, Cæsar at twenty-one, Pollio at twenty-two. Tac. *de Orat.* 34.; Quintil. *Inst.* xii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> There are some curious passages in the speech *de Provinciis Consularibus*, in which Cicero excuses himself for seeming to waive his notorious hostility to Cæsar: "8. Me communis utilitatis habere rationem non doloris mei." "18. Accepi injuriam; inimicus esse debui; non nego." "20. Hoc tempore rei publicæ consulere, inimicitias in aliud tempus reservare deberem."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *de Orat.* 36.: "Assignatæ domibus inimicitia. 40. Jus potentissimum quemque vexandi, atque ipsa inimicitiarum gloria." Hist. ii. 53.: "Ut novus adhuc, et in senatum nuper ascitus, magnis inimicitias claresceret." Champagny, *Cæsar*, i. p. 237.



occupied the place of love; it was invested with a sanctity and solemnity of obligation which approached almost to chivalry: but the reaction from it was an enmity not less deeply felt nor less solemnly pronounced: the foe was not less devoted than the friend.<sup>1</sup> Neither shame therefore nor humanity interfered to check this passion for accusation, in which the Romans were to the full as unscrupulous and unfeeling, though dealing with their own countrymen, as they were in invading the lands of the foreigner. This fearful vice was gilded under the free state by the splendour of the objects to which it was directed, the magnitude of the interests involved, and the abilities and powers of the giants it summoned to the contest.<sup>2</sup> In the atmosphere of liberty it called many corresponding virtues into action; it produced on the whole one of the highest manifestations of human nature, and taking the good with the evil, we may not perhaps be entitled to regret the existence which was permitted to it. But for the same vice, as it appeared under the empire, no such excuse can be offered. Then too, as soon as the young patrician had quitted the schools of the declaimers, he longed to make a trial of his accomplishments, and sought an object on which to flesh the maiden sword of his eloquence. There were no longer party interests into which to throw himself; the class of intriguing politicians

<sup>1</sup> The Duel, the legitimate descendant of private warfare, could have no place in Roman society, which regarded man as the citizen only, an unit in the body corporate. Personal violence was prohibited by law, and even carrying arms was interdicted. The *Cu*, the resource of sullenness and shyness, is, I believe, a strictly English institution; and the formal renunciation of friendship was the last resource of outraged feeling among the Romans. Thus Germanicus sends Piso a solemn declaration that their friendship is at an end. Tiberius forbids Labeo his house. *Tac. Ann.* vi. 29.: "Morem fuisse majoribus, quoties dirimerent amicitias, interdicere domo, eumque finem gratiæ ponere." In reply to the common apology for the duel, that it prevents assassination, it may be remarked that assassination was almost unknown to a late period among the Romans.

<sup>2</sup> The reader should refer to the passage of Tacitus *de Orat.*, 34-37, one of the most interesting in ancient literature.

no longer existed, whose attempts against the liberties of the commonwealth demanded his vigilance and invited his exposure; the provinces, administered at last on settled principles, and kept under the eye of the central government, afforded still some, but much rarer, cases of public wrong to denounce and avenge. What remained then for the young aspirant? how exercise the gifts he had so long been fostering in private, and ventilate abroad the talents to which schools and saloons had accorded such inspiring acclamations? The progress of special legislation, diverted as it was from the public to the private career of the Roman, entering into his dwelling and penetrating the recesses of his home life, gave birth to manifold modes of transgression and evasion, such as the prying eyes of a domestic spy alone could track. The government, which might despair of vindicating its authority by the exertions of its own officers, was grateful to the passion for forensic distinction, which now urged the aspirant for fame to drag to light every petty violation of every frivolous enactment. According to the spirit of Roman criminal procedure, the informer and the pleader were one and the same person. There was no public accuser to manage the prosecution for the government on information from whatever sources derived; but the spy who discovered the delinquency was himself the man to demand of the senate, the prætor, or the judge, an opportunity of proving it by his own eloquence and ingenuity. The odium of prosecution was thus removed from the government to the private delator; an immense advantage to a rule of force which pretended to be popular. The common right of accusation, the birth-right of the Roman citizen, the palladium, so esteemed, of Roman freedom, became thus the most convenient instrument of despotism. But however odious such a profession might generally make itself, whatever the infamy to which it would be consigned by posterity, those who practised it reaped the reward they sought in money and celebrity, in influence and authority, in the favour of the prince, and not rarely in the applause of the multitude. They could wreak their malice

on their private enemies under the guise of zeal for the public service ; they might gratify the worst of passions, and exult, under the shadow of the imperial tyranny, in the exercise of a tyranny hardly less omnipotent of their own. The social corruption such a state of things produced grew fast and rankly, and is marked by the swift progress of the contagion from the first raw and ignoble professors to men of real distinction in the state. Beginning with youths fresh from school, or the teachers of rhetoric themselves, it soon spread to magistrates and consuls, and many of the most illustrious statesmen of the early empire were notorious for their addiction to this meanest and most debasing of vices.

As for Tiberius himself, the fanaticism with which he strove to execute in detail the laws bequeathed him by his predecessors, induced him early to stoop to the degradation of countenancing the practice of delation. Refusing to bend under the enormous burden of public affairs, and disdaining or fearing to associate with himself any assistant, as Augustus had wisely done from the first, he strove pertinaciously to make himself familiar with the whole machinery of government, and to take a personal share in all its procedure. He was constant in attendance on the judicial trials of the senate, but only to secure the impartiality of its decisions ; he assisted also at the tribunals of the magistrates, taking his seat at the extremity of the bench, to avert the suspicion of unfairly influencing them.<sup>1</sup> Delation he prized as the machinery by which the true ends of justice could, as he imagined, most readily be obtained. When he discovered the vile uses to which it was put, and felt its impolicy and unpopularity, he did not refuse to check and discourage it ; and he established a new tribunal of fifteen senators, by the weight of whose character he may have hoped to moderate it, and afford, as

Encourage-  
ment of dela-  
tion by Tibe-  
rius.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 33. : "Ac primo eatenus interveniebat ne quid perperam fieret . . . assidebatque juxtim vel ex adverso in parte primori." Comp. Tac. *Ann.* i. 75. : "In cornu tribunalis." Dion, *lvii.* 7. But, as Tacitus remarks "Dum veritatē consultitur, libertas corrumpitur."

was said, some alleviation to the peril and terror of the citizens.<sup>1</sup> Certain it is that the records of the earlier years of the Tiberian despotism abound in evidence of the emperor's solicitude for the pure administration of justice, and the constant struggle in which he was engaged with the reckless spirit of violence and cruelty, of which accusers and judges equally partook. Ultimately his own steadfastness and constancy gave way. He yielded to the torrent he could no longer stem alone. He resigned himself to the sedulous attentions of an evil counsellor, who relieved him by consummate artifice, without his consciousness, of great part of his burden, and persuaded him to neglect the rest, and leave the corruption of society to take its course. Tiberius was induced to acquiesce in the necessity of vices he had originally striven to resist, and to wrap himself in the selfish conviction that his own safety was the highest object of government. Then came the full development of the occult principles of the law of treason; then came the fierce and fanatical stimulus which was given to the appetite for delation: the conflagration raged over Rome and Italy, involving every noble mansion in its blaze, and overthrowing many to their foundations.<sup>2</sup> It was ruled to be criminal to perform before an emperor's effigy on a coin or ring any act which would be indecent in the presence of the emperor himself, such as to strip a slave for chastisement, or even to strip oneself for the bath; finally, a citizen was condemned for entering a brothel with a piece of money on which the imperial countenance was stamped.<sup>3</sup> While the fountain of justice was polluted by founding inquiry into these offences on no express laws, but only on perverse and extravagant deductions from them, the legitimate forms of procedure

Extravagances  
of the Law of  
Majesty.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. iii. 28.

Tac. l. c.: "Urbemque et Italiam et quod usquam civium corripuerant, multorumque excisi status." Comp. Ann. i. 73.: "Quibus initiis, quanta Tiberii arte, gravissimum exitium irrepsit, dein repressum sit, postremo arserit, cunctaque corripuerit."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. Tib. 59. It must be remembered that the emperor's was not the only

were no longer carefully preserved. Though in cases of *majestas* the senate alone was the authorized tribunal, the prince gradually claimed to take cognisance of them himself. Tiberius ceased to abide by the ordinary rules of evidence. Augustus himself had evaded the principle of law, that a slave might not be examined by torture against his master, by causing him to be seized and sold to a public officer, and then stretched as the slave of another on the rack.<sup>1</sup> But even this formality was no longer observed. The penalty of death was frequently substituted for banishment, and the worst precedent of the Sullan proscriptions was sometimes followed, in subjecting the criminal's children to the same fate as himself. The property of the condemned was confiscated: if his life was spared, he might be disqualified from making a will; and if he perished before sentence by his own hand, baffled justice might avenge herself by the infliction of posthumous infamy.<sup>2</sup> On the case of *Ælius*

A. D. 22.  
A. U. 775.

*Saturninus*, who was flung from the Tarpeian rock for a libel on the emperor, an historian remarks that this was one only of many instances of the infliction of death for reflections on the life and habits of Tiberius; upon which he adds, that the Romans marvelled at the impolitic jealousy which thus exposed by public processes details which, whether true or false, acquired from these processes only their general notoriety and acceptance. People, he says, imagined Tiberius must be mad to insist, often against the explicit denial of the accused, that crimes and vices had been imputed to him, which a man of sense would have willingly left unnoticed. But for the wisdom and policy of his general

head still stamped upon the current coins. Other members of the *Cæsarcan* family partook of that honour. The gold and silver coinage was imperial, but Augustus allowed the senate to issue the copper currency. The names, however, of the triumviri monetales do not occur on medals after the year 740, according to *Eckhel, Doctr. Numm. v. 64.*

<sup>1</sup> *Dion*, lv. 5.; *Tac. Ann.* iii. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Tac. Ann.* ii. 81. This was called "*damnatio memoriae*." *Suetonius* crowns this confusion of law and justice by saying, "*Omne crimen pro capitali receptum.*"

administration, which was still patent to the world, this hypothesis of insanity would have received general assent: as it was, his conduct in this respect could only be viewed as a strange example of human inconsistency. The particulars, however, of these charges, thus scrupulously and minutely detailed in the language of legal procedure, were preserved in the public records, which thus became an official repository for every calumny against the emperor which floated on the impure surface of common conversation. We cannot but suspect that this was the storehouse to which Tacitus and Suetonius, or the obscurer writers from whom they drew, resorted for the reputed details of a prince's habits, whom it was the pleasure and interest of many parties to blacken to the utmost. The foulest stories current against Tiberius were probably the very charges advanced against him by libellers such as Saturninus, which he openly contradicted and denounced at the time, and which would have sunk into oblivion with the mass of contemporary slander, but for the restless and suicidal jealousy with which he himself registered and labelled them in the archives of indignant justice.<sup>2</sup>

The subjects of Tiberius, we are assured, conceived a high opinion of the wisdom and policy of his general administration. Even Tacitus, not a favourable nor even a just critic of his character, admits that his conduct in regard to the law of majesty was the only blot on a government distinguished, at least for many years, by prudence, equity, and mildness.<sup>2</sup> But Tacitus, as we shall presently see, is far from consistent with himself in this, as in other expressions of opinion. The first and most urgent duty of the chief of the empire, following the traditions of the consular administration, was to maintain the honour and security of her possessions abroad, and against the foreigner on the frontiers. The law of empire, in

Consolidation  
of the Roman  
dominion under  
Tiberius.

Dion, lvii. 22, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 6.: "Leges, si majestatis quæstio eximeretur, bono in usu." By this we are not to understand merely the judicial procedure, but the handling of the broad principles of administration.

the popular view, was continual progress and aggression. To extend the limits of his own province was the business of every proconsul, and to extend the limits of every province was still reputed the paramount duty of the imperator, himself the universal proconsul. The first idea of Cæsar, on attaining sovereignty in the city, was to effect the annexation of Parthia. Augustus had no such wild ambition, no such blind instinct of conquest: he sedulously abstained in many quarters from pushing forward the conquering eagles, feeling as he did that the extent of his possessions was already quite as great as one arm could control, too great indeed, as had been amply demonstrated, for the jealous co-rule of consuls and senators. Nevertheless Augustus had never wholly desisted from aggressive warfare beyond the limits of *Terminus*. In Egypt and Arabia, as well as still later in Germany, he had maintained views of conquest, though he had refrained from putting out in any quarter the whole strength of his armies. During his reign the empire had been increased with solid additions; and it had been no vain boast of his courtiers that he had advanced its frontiers into new zones and under unknown constellations.<sup>1</sup> Yet Augustus, it was well known, had left to his successor, as a legacy of political wisdom, the counsel not to extend the limits of Roman sovereignty. This advice Tiberius frankly accepted. He withdrew his legions, as soon as the ambition of Germanicus would permit him, within the Rhine; and if he allowed campaigns to be still waged in the valleys of the Atlas, these were strictly for security and not for conquest. His abstaining from the plantation of military colonies in the provinces, was a pledge of the sincerity of his peaceful policy.<sup>2</sup> Instead of extending the frontiers, he was intent on consolidating his possessions within them, converting tributary kingdoms into taxable provinces, and reducing restless barbarians to some

<sup>1</sup> Virg. *Æn.* vi. 795.:

“Jacet ultra sidera tellus,  
Extra anni Solisque vices . . . .”

<sup>2</sup> See A. Zumpt: *Comment. Epigraph.* i. 381.

thing more than a nominal subjection. It was under this reign, accordingly, that the far regions of Africa, so long exposed to plunder and disturbance from the nomade hordes in the recesses of their mountains, were placed in a state of security, which continued unassailed for centuries; that the authority of Rome was first established permanently throughout the wild district of Thrace, so important for connecting the conquest of Rome on the Danube with the sources of her wealth in the Lesser Asia; that Cyzicus and Cappadocia were incorporated in the universal empire, and made to contribute from their wealth or poverty to relieve the pampered impatience of taxation in Rome and Italy. All these were in fact substantial conquests, though they might not be known by such a title, in which the emperor spared no artifice nor even fraud, while he cautiously abstained; as far as possible, from the use of arms.<sup>1</sup> The reign of Tiberius deserves, accordingly, to be marked as an era of no trifling moment in the consolidation of the Roman power. It is probable that his own contemporaries were by no means unaware of this, and abundantly satisfied with a policy which threw many of their burdens on their subjects and auxiliaries. Victories and triumphs could have done no more. But a hundred years later, as we shall see, another emperor arose, who added wide provinces to the unwieldy bulk of his dominions, and performed martial exploits which recalled the days of the Scipios and Cæsars; and transient and fruitless as his successes proved, they served to point an unfavourable and unjust comparison with the bloodless gains of his predecessor. Tacitus, who wrote under the inspiration of the glories of Trajan, though admitting the general wisdom of the third Cæsar's policy, condescends to sneer at his abstinence from conquest, as something pusillanimous and unworthy of the Roman name.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 37.: "Hostiles motus per legatos compecscuit; nec per eos nisi cumctanter et necessario. Reges suspectosque comminationibus magis et querelis quam vi repressit."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 32.: "Princeps proferendi imperii incuriosus erat." Compare iv. 4. with a direct allusion to the conquests of Trajan, "Quanto sit an-



While, however, Augustus had been obliged to entrust the conduct of his campaigns to princes raised almost to an equal rank and power with himself, his successor, by refraining from aggressive warfare, with all the vast combinations it required, could keep all his lieutenants in the modest position befitting their vocation, and spare the empire the perils which might flow from an excited and pampered ambition. The legions were maintained in the same stations as under Augustus. The bank of the Rhine was still guarded, as we have seen, by eight, four in the Upper, and as many in the Lower Germania. The Iberian provinces were secured by three only: for their reduction, though recent, was now justly deemed complete. Mauretania, which Augustus had at one time incorporated with the empire, had been again erected into a tributary kingdom, and given to Juba, as a present from the Roman people. The African provinces were held by two legions, and two more were stationed in Egypt. Four were assigned for the protection of the East; they were quartered principally at Berytus on the Mediterranean, at Antioch and Cæsarea, or in scattered detachments on the heights of the Taurus and Libanus: they showed a front to the Parthians on the Euphrates, and supported the trembling thrones of the petty chiefs of the Caucasus, who were maintained as a check on the more powerful sovereigns of the plains. Thrace was consigned to the defence of kings of its own nation, under Roman superintendence; while two legions were posted on the Danube in Pannonia, and as many on the same stream, after it took the name of Ister, in the lower regions of Mœsia. Two more divisions, making a total complement of five-and-twenty, were quartered in Dalmatia, and formed a reserve for the armies of the East, while at the same time they were near enough to awe the submissive populations of Greece and Lesser Asia. Their position at Apollonia, Dyrrhachium, or

Stations of the  
legions under  
Tiberius.

gustus Imperitatum." Here again, as in the case of delation, we see how Tacitus's estimate of the policy of Tiberius is coloured by his glowing conceptions of his own master's glory.

Nicopolis was more important from its proximity to Italy, of which, in fact, they constituted virtually the garrison; for the empire still preserved the tradition of the republic, that the legions were the instruments of foreign domination, not of domestic authority; and no legionary force was allowed to pitch its tents within the sacred limits of the land, all the free inhabitants of which were now Roman citizens. The police of Italy was entrusted to a force of the name of which she had not yet learnt to be jealous. Three Urban and three Prætorian cohorts, the city guards and the life guards, kept watch over the security of the metropolis and the person of the ruler; but these it was thought necessary to levy exclusively from the most central districts of the peninsula, from Latium itself or from Umbria and Etruria, and the ancient colonies of the Latin franchise.<sup>1</sup> Slender as these forces appear for the defence of so vast a territory, we are to remember that the auxiliary troops dispersed in the provinces where they were most needed are not included in the list; and these, we are assured, in general terms, may have equalled the number of the legionaries.<sup>2</sup>

It might be easier to maintain the fidelity and discipline of these numerous armies in the excitement of warfare than under the dull monotony of the camp in time of peace. Tiberius's success in this respect,—for after the first commencement of his reign there was no mutiny, nor even the seditious attempt of a discon-

The discipline of the legions strenuously maintained.

<sup>1</sup> In giving this list of the legions, Tacitus (*Ann.* iv. 5.) refers particularly to the ninth year of Tiberius (A. U. 776. A. D. 23.). He does not mention, and seems indeed not to know of any German guards at Rome. Augustus, we have seen, had such a body-guard; but he dismissed them after the defeat of Varus, and it is probable that they were not re-embodied by his successor.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus points out this difference between the legions and the auxiliary cohorts, that the latter were constantly moved from place to place, while the former were kept stationary. The exact proportion of auxiliaries was uncertain, and no doubt varied. *Dion.* iv. 24. That they were generally about equal to the legionaries may be deduced from Tacitus, *Ann.* iv. 5. *Suet. Tib.* 16. and from the arrangements of the Hyginian camp. See Marguardt in Becker's *Röm. Alterth.* iii. 2. p. 365.

tented officer,—arose no doubt from his firmness in refusing concession to demands for relaxation and indulgence. The complaints which startled him on his accession to power were put down partly by the vigour of his envoys, the princes of his own family, but partly also by vague assurances of redress, extorted from his first alarm; these however he retracted or evaded on recovering his presence of mind. The crisis, it may be allowed, was one at which any actual concession might probably have broken down the whole system of iron discipline on which the obedience of the legions rested. Nor would Tiberius encourage the soldiers to look for extraordinary gratuities by occasional largesses, such as Augustus and Cæsar before him had so liberally dispensed. After paying them the sum bequeathed them by his predecessor, which indeed he thought it became him to double, he made no further appeal to their favour and gratitude, except on one important occasion, at a late period of his reign, in requital for a particular service.<sup>1</sup> He trusted, for securing their devotion, solely to the regard they entertained for his title of Emperor, and the deserts by which he had attained it.

Not only the respect in which the commonwealth was held by foreign potentates, but the submission and awe of the provincial populations, depended mainly on the firmness of the hand which kept her soldiers to their standards.<sup>2</sup> The tranquillity and contentment of the provinces under Tiberius bear witness to his merits as commander of the Roman armies. While writers with whom we are the most familiar depict the character of this Cæsar in the most hideous colours, and only with manifest reluctance admit any circumstances which bespeak the moderation and equity of his rule, it is remarkable that the independent testimony of two provincial authorities combines to

The governors  
of provinces  
kept for several  
years in office.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 36.; Dion, *lvii.* 5.; Suet. *Tib.* 48.

<sup>2</sup> Vell. ii. 126.: "Diffusa in orientis occidentisque tractus, et quidquid meridiano aut septentrione finitur, pax augusta per omnes terrarum orbis angulos a latrociniorum metu servat immunes."

assure us that in the provinces at least his administration was beneficent, and his memory held in honour. Thus Philo of Judea speaks in glowing terms of the wisdom and mildness of the government of Alexandria under the auspices of Tiberius, and exalts still more eloquently the happy condition of the world at the moment of his demise.<sup>1</sup> Again, the Jewish historian Josephus confirms the statement of others, that this emperor departed widely from the ordinary principle of provincial administration, in prolonging the stay of the proconsuls from its usual brief term to a longer and ultimately to an indefinite period.<sup>2</sup> This novel usage, he assures us, though allowing that it coincided with the emperor's habits of procrastination, and a certain infirmity of purpose which grew upon him in age, was conceived in a spirit of equity, and intended to remove the main cause of the sufferings of the provinces, in the ardour with which each new governor had hastened to make his fortune. Tiberius was wont to justify his policy by an appropriate apologue:—*A number of flies had settled on a soldier's wound, and a compassionate passer-by was about to scare them away. The sufferer begged him to refrain. These flies, he said, have nearly sucked their full, and are beginning to be tolerable: if you drive them off, they will be immediately succeeded by fresh comers with keener appetites.* The progress indeed of regular government seemed to demand a change on this point, which should enable the affairs of the empire to be conducted by fixed and uniform procedure, while it spared the people the fluctuations as well as the expenses incident to a continual change of governors. It serves to mark the transition now in progress in the government of the provinces, from the sway of an encamped proconsul to that of an established viceroy. There seems no reason to doubt that the conduct of Tiberius in this particular, stripped of all unfair interpretation, was part of a set-

<sup>1</sup> Philo in *Flacc.* 1, 2.; *Legat. in Cai.* 2.: *τις γὰρ ἰδὼν . . . οἱ κ' ἐθαύμασε καὶ κατεκλήγη τῆς ὑπερφθονίας καὶ πάντος λόγου κρείττονος εὐπραγίας.* This curious passage will deserve to be noticed more particularly at a later period.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. § 5.

tled and well-meant policy, however much it may have indulged the personal indolence, to which alone his detractors have chosen to ascribe it, or agreed with his jealous indisposition to multiply the number of distinguished and confidential coadjutors.<sup>1</sup> But it caused, we may suppose, great dissatisfaction among the candidates for place and emolument, and may be ranked among the motives of the hatred of the nobility towards him.

This change in the view in which the provinces were to be regarded, no longer as prostrate enemies, but as common children of the state with the citizens themselves, appears in the acknowledgment first made by Tiberius of the duty of extending the public liberality to the wants of the national dependents. A great step was gained in the cause of humanity and civilization, a great advance towards the overthrow of the selfish prejudices of conquest, when the subjects were admitted to have claims on the state as well as obligations towards it. It marks the commencement of what has been called the reaction of the provinces upon Rome, when, on the occasion of an earthquake, which overthrew not less than twelve cities of Lesser Asia, the prince proclaimed aloud that it was an imperial calamity and merited relief from imperial resources.<sup>2</sup> The control of the provincial governors was no longer left to the

Improved  
treatment of  
the provinces.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 41. 68.; Tac. *Ann.* i. 80., vi. 27. Dion (*lvi.* 23.) accounts for it differently: τοσοῦτον πλῆθος τῶν τε ἄλλων καὶ τῶν βουλευτῶν ἀπώλετο ὥστε τοὺς ἀρχοντας τοὺς κληρωτοὺς, τοὺς μὲν ἐστρατηγηκότας ἐπὶ τρία, τοὺς δὲ ὑπατευκότας ἐπὶ ἑξ ἔτη τὰς ἡγεμονίας τῶν ἐθνῶν, ἀπορία τῶν διαδεχομένων αὐτοὺς σχεῖν. But whatever be the merits of the system, it was introduced in fact not by Tiberius, but by Augustus. See Dion, *lv.* 28.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 47. (A. V. 770. A. D. 17.), alluded to also by Pliny. *Hist. Nat.* ii. 86.: "Eodem anno xii. celebres Asiae urbes collapsæ nocturno motu terræ." Their taxes were remitted for a term of years, large sums were granted them in ready money, and a special commissioner was sent by the senate to superintend its application. See above, chap. xliii. The twelve cities all lay in the district of Lydia. This earthquake is perhaps the most destructive of any on record. Comp. Von Hoff, *Erdbeben*, iv. 169. But even while I write the city of Broussa is trembling to its foundation with another

casual and interested activity of self-constituted accusers, or to the jealousy of political partisans: never before had the officials been kept in the path of moderation and purity by the restraints of a systematic procedure; and the many instances in which they were still accused and convicted of rapacity and injustice may be accepted in proof, not of the increased frequency of their guilt, but of greater vigilance in detecting it. It will be remarked, also, on examining the cases of this kind recorded, that they refer more commonly to the senatorial, such as Asia and Africa, than to the imperial provinces.<sup>1</sup> In the latter the officials were appointed more directly by the emperor himself, and their duties and prerogatives more definitely prescribed. Good conduct, whether in the highest posts or the lowest, secured them undisturbed enjoyment of their places for many years or even for their lives. The happier lot of these provinces is attested by the fact, that to be removed from the rule of the senate and placed under that of the emperor, was regarded as a boon by the provincials themselves.<sup>2</sup> The old plan, indeed, of farming the revenues of the provinces by the publicani, now as heretofore generally Roman knights, still continued in force: the time had not yet arrived, perhaps, when this system, which recommended itself quite as much for its simplicity and convenience as for the means it afforded of enriching the ruling class, could be dispensed with. The corporation of publicani, which engaged for the revenues of a district, required the heads of towns and cantons to assess the proportions of houses and families; and probably the levy was thus on the whole more equitably as well as more economically made, with the aid of local knowledge, than it would have been by processes more familiar to ourselves, and adapted to more homogeneous populations. But Tiberius deserves credit for the firmness with which he resisted the temptations which commonly beset a government under this

<sup>1</sup> See Hoeck, *Rom. Gesch.* i. 3. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Tac. *Ann.* i. 76. "Achaiam et Macedoniam onera deprecantur levare in praesens proconsulari imperio tradique Caesari placuit."

method of taxation. He refused to apply the screw to his financial agents, and require the larger return which he was assured might easily be extracted from them. *A good shepherd*, he was wont to say, *must shear his sheep and not flay them*.<sup>1</sup> Among his wholesome regulations for the protection of the provincials against the rapacity of their rulers was a decree, by which the officers, however guiltless they might be themselves, were made responsible for the misconduct of their consorts in this particular: for the women, it was found, were more prone to take bribes and sell the favours of the government than the men. He ruled, however, after a debate, the details of which are curious and not uninteresting, that the attendance of the wives upon their husbands abroad was a less evil than such as might flow from forbidding them that indulgence.<sup>2</sup>

But the care of Tiberius was not confined to the provinces. He devoted himself with untiring industry to the reform of abuses in the government of Italy, to assuring general security and tranquillity, and alleviating distress. He protected the inhabitants from robbers and banditti by military posts in various places, and stimulated the diligence of the city police. His measures for maintaining order in the capital were temperate and well considered. Instead of treating the players, whose over-ardent admirers were constantly fighting and rioting about them, as mere servants of the government, and subjecting them again, as before the time of Augustus, to the rods of the Prætor, he was satisfied with reducing the public grants for their encouragement, and forbidding the senators from entering their dwellings, and the knights from trooping round them in the streets: the theatre alone, he declared, was appropriated to visiting them. At the same time, they were no longer held responsible for the peace of the city; but the penalty of banishment was de-

Government of  
Italy and the  
city.

Control over  
the players.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. Tib. 32: "Boni pastoris esse tondere pecus non deglubere. Comp Tac. Ann. iv. 6.; Dion, lvi. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. iv. 20. foll.

nounced against the spectators who should cause disturbances there.<sup>1</sup> On occasion, however, of a riot which occurred in the year 776, we find that both the players themselves, and the leaders of the theatrical factions, were expelled together from the city, nor was the emperor prevailed on, by the most pressing instances, to recall the offenders.<sup>2</sup>

This interference with their amusements was a grave offence to the populace. When Tiberius limited the number of gladiators in the arena, the citizens complained with bitterness that he took no genial pleasure in the old Roman recreations. They were indignant at having their draught of blood measured to them by drops. Though all classes were equally addicted to the crime or folly of consulting conjurors and diviners, the measures which Tiberius enforced, after the example of Augustus, Agrippa, and the legislators of the free state before them, for expelling the astrologers from Italy, caused far less dissatisfaction. This latter prohibition, indeed, was easily evaded.<sup>3</sup> The emperor himself, the most superstitious of his nation, could not resolve to rid his own palace of the herd of soothsayers, who so well knew how to play upon his fears and hopes. While he indulged himself in prying into his own future fates, he could not prevent the inquiries of friends or enemies, flatterers and intriguers: to cast the imperial horoscope became the dangerous amusement from which few courtiers or politicians had the firmness to abstain. The *Mathematici*, said Tacitus, are a class who mislead the ambitious and disappoint the powerful; who will always be for-

The soothsayers expelled from Italy.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 75.; Suet. *Tib.* 34. Comp. *Digest.* xlviii. 19. 28. § 2.; Vell. ii. 126.: "Compressa theatralis seditio."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 37.; Tac. *Ann.* iv. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 32. One of these people was thrown from the Tarpeian rock, another was beaten to death with the stick, the ancient military punishment. Tacitus says, "Consules extra portam Esquilinam, cum classicum canere jussissent, more prisco advertere." This is explained by Suetonius, *Ner.* 49.: "Nudi hominis cervicem insurere furcæ et corpus virgis ad necem cœlere."



bidden a place among us, yet will always be retained here.<sup>1</sup>

These measures against the astrologers were not more ineffectual than those which Tiberius also took for the suppression of Egyptian and Jewish rites. He was not led, however, to these regulations by the principles which animated his predecessor. He did not regard himself as the defender, or restorer of the ancient cult, as the patron of Roman observances in opposition to novel and extraneous usages. He looked merely to the practical evils which might result from any heterodox movement, and his zeal against these Oriental innovations was roused by the mystery in which they were for the most part shrouded, by the nocturnal ceremonies which they generally affected, and by the connexion with the dreaded inquiry into the future generally ascribed to them. A single case of gross scandal imputed to the priests of Isis at Rome was sufficient perhaps to give colour to the emperor's strong proceedings against that cult and its followers. The statue of the goddess was precipitated into the Tiber, and her rites forbidden in the capital.<sup>2</sup> Similar measures were taken against the religious observances of the Jews at Rome. When required to enlist in the Roman armies, this people pleaded their ancient national prejudice against military service, and the indulgence it had enjoyed from earlier Cæsars. But this refusal was now made a pretext for accusing them of disloyalty, for the prohibition of their worship, the demolition of their sacred instruments and vestments, and finally their expulsion from Italy. Four thousand freedmen, of Jewish origin or tenets, were drafted from Rome into Sardinia, to repress the brigandage of that wild region.<sup>3</sup> It would seem, however, that at a

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 22.: "Genus hominum potentibus infidum, sperantibus fallax, quod in civitate nostra et vetabitur semper, et retinebitur."

<sup>2</sup> See in Josephus (*Antiq.* xviii. 3.) the story of Mundus, whose licentious passion was gratified by the priests of Anubis.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 85.: "Quatuor millia libertini generis ea superstitione infecta: et si ob gravitatem cœli interissent, vile damnum." I infer from the

later period Tiberius relaxed in his severity towards this people, and adopted means of conciliating them. They were fain to believe that the harshness of his earlier legislation was due to the malignant influence of the detested Sejanus.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of a regular system of legal protection for subjects of every degree went hand in hand with the abolition or limitation of such irregular substitutes for it as the right of asylum, with which religious feeling had stepped in where human law failed to perform its duty. It was chiefly in the eastern provinces that this right of asylum was recognised, and sanctioned by long usage and favour. The multiplication of these places of refuge, fostered by the cupidity of the priest, had extended a dangerous impunity to all manner of crimes, and increased the number of offenders. Such, however, was the influence of the priests on the superstition of the vulgar, that every attempt to check this encouragement to disorder had been vehemently resented, and had led in many cases to disturbances and riots. Tiberius undertook to abate the nuisance, and acted with good sense and decision. He required the cities which exercised this right of protection in their cherished fanes, to produce just grounds, by prescription or legal ordinance, for the claims they advanced. He limited the extent of territory to which the privilege should apply, for it was claimed not for the sacred walls only, or the outer inclosure of the temple, but often for large tracts of land around them; he defined, perhaps with greater strictness, the character of the offences to which protection should be

Limitation of  
the right of asy-  
lum.

construction that the writer here expresses the sentiment of the decree itself, rather than his own. Suet. *Tib.* 38.: "Judæorum juventutem per speciem sacramenti in provincias gravioris cœli distribuit." Comp. Senec. *Ep.* 108. The incident has been already referred to in chap. xxxiv. The victims, as I suppose, were partly Jews by extraction, but perhaps more generally proselytes of Greek or Asiatic origin.

<sup>1</sup> Philo. *Legat. ad Cai.* 24. On the statement of Tertullian (*Apol.* 5.), regarding the favour, as he pretends, of Tiberius towards Christianity, I shall speak on a future occasion.

granted; and thus, without abolishing the institution itself, he set some bounds to its licence, with the approbation, no doubt, of the wisest of his subjects.<sup>1</sup> In Rome, the centre of law and rights well understood, the privilege of asylum had never flourished as in the more disturbed regions of the East. Nevertheless the tribunitian sanctity of the emperor became gradually extended to his statues, and culprits or fugitive slaves, on touching an image or picture of the august personage, were allowed to defy the law, and the privileges, otherwise unbounded, of their masters. This means of protection was soon turned to a weapon of offence; holding up an imperial coin between his thumb and finger, any ruffian might stand in the public streets and rail with impunity against the honourable and noble: the client might abuse and threaten his patron, the slave might even raise his hand against his master. This flagrant abuse was not checked, for none ventured to brave the delators, who might easily frame on the attempt a process of majestas, until a senator having been pelted with opprobrious language by a woman, a notorious delinquent, whom he was bringing to justice, Drusus himself, at the request of the perplexed fathers, interposed and threw the offender into prison, in spite of the emperor's image which she eloquently brandished in his face.<sup>2</sup>

This insolent defiance of public opinion and the general sense of morality was an ominous sign of the times. No sumptuary laws, though sanctioned by the wisest politicians, and invoked by the uneasy consciences of the citizens themselves, availed to stem the dissipation and extravagance, which increased with every restriction upon nobler aims and occupations. The vast sums notoriously expended on the dainties of the table,

Flagrant dissipation of the times.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 37.: "Abolavit et vim moremque asyloꝝ quæ usquam erant;" but Tacitus (*Ann.* iii. 60.) modifies this statement: "Crebrescebat Græcas per urbes licentia atque impunitas asyla statuendi . . . facta senatus consulta quia, magno cum honore, modus tamen præscribatur."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 36.

the profusion of table ornaments, plate, and jewellery, and the extravagant prices given for articles of mere fashion, such as vases of mixed Corinthian metal, and boards of Numidian citron-wood, provoked the indignation of the morose Tiberius.<sup>1</sup> He urged the senate to repression. But his counsellors were indisposed to strong measures, and the emperor himself soon wearied of the hopeless struggle. Contenting himself with some trifling regulations for appearance sake, he acknowledged with a sigh that the times were not fit for a censorship of manners. When the ædiles represented that the sumptuary laws of Augustus, fixing the prices for certain articles of luxury, were habitually disregarded, he replied that those after all were but trifling matters compared with the real dangers accruing to the commonwealth from the demands of selfish cupidity and the accumulation of great estates. *Italy*, he exclaimed, *yea, Rome herself depends for her daily food on foreign harvests, on the vicissitudes of the weather, and the uncertain humours of the Ocean. Unless our provinces come to our support, will our farms maintain us, or our forests feed us?* He alluded to the neglect of cultivation throughout the peninsula, which was now generally remarked, and to the complaints which had grown in force for a hundred and fifty years, of the decline of the ancient strength of the country, the population of free labourers. This, he said, was a graver concern than the price of plates and dishes; the latter might be a fitting matter for the ædiles to care for, as consuls, prætors, and every other magistrate had each their proper sphere of vigilance; but something of higher and more general interest was demanded of the princeps. While therefore he maintained the peace and credit of the empire, and quelled the turbulence or corruption of the assemblies, and the faction of the senate,—

Tiberius de-  
spairs of check-  
ing it by sump-  
tuary laws.

A. D. 22.  
A. U. 775.

<sup>1</sup> Tertull. *de pallio*, 5.: "M. Tullius quingentis millibus orbem citri emit, qua bis tantum Asinius Gallus pro mensa ejusdem Mauretaniæ numerat." Comp. Lucan, ix. 426., x. 144.; Petronius, *Satyr.* 119.; Martial, ix. 60.; Plin. *Nat. Hist.* v. 15.

while he provided for the wants of the day before him, and supplied an abundance of grain to the city,—he cast on the ædiles the care of the sumptuary enactments which were vainly expected to train the age to economy, but which the age rejected with insolent contempt.<sup>1</sup>

As regarded public morality, Tiberius marched in the steps of his predecessor, not indeed in the spirit of an enthusiast, or with any ardent aspirations for the purity of the Roman blood or honour of the Roman name, but as a matter of duty and discipline. He resented the insensibility to shame of many of the young citizens even of knightly or senatorial families, who in their passion for displaying their accomplishments as singers or dancers on the stage, a degradation strictly forbidden to their class, contrived to get themselves legally degraded, to enable them thus to present themselves with impunity. Against this ignoble evasion new and more stringent edicts were levelled. In making the licentiousness of a Roman matron a public offence, Augustus had overshot his mark. Among other impediments which arose to the enforcement of the Julian legislation on this delicate subject, it was found difficult to induce disinterested persons to prosecute as public accusers. Possibly it was with the view of obviating the scandal of open procedure in such lamentable cases, that Tiberius revived the primitive usage, and delivered the culprits to be tried and punished by their own kinsmen, *after the manner of the ancients*. In the olden time, these domestic tribunals had inflicted even death for trifling indecorums. But the law allowed the defenceless frail ones a method of escape, which some women did not scruple to embrace. The penalties of irregularity were strict and severe; but from these professed prostitution was exempted, and immunity might be purchased by exchanging the decent stole of ma-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 53, 54.; Vell. ii. 126.: "Revocata in forum fides, summota e foro seditio, ambitio campo, discordia curia . . . quando annona moderatio?"

tronhood for the toga of the avowed courtesan.<sup>1</sup> While resort to this disgraceful refuge was confined to a few plebeian cases it attracted little notice; when, however, wives of men of the highest class were found to inscribe themselves on the sedile's list, to escape the loss of dowry, confiscation, and banishment, the penalties of the Julian law, the princeps determined to close this last means of retreat, by a new and sweeping edict.<sup>2</sup>

The Roman legislators had never been famous for adhering in their own persons to the rules they enforced on their fellow-citizens. What then, it may be asked, was the private character of the man who showed himself thus harsh and prudish in his public capacity? His amusements and relaxations, no mean element in the character of every Roman, were frivolous rather than corrupt; nor, yet at least, can he fairly be charged with habits of excessive indulgence. In regard to women, there is no evidence against the morals of Tiberius up to the period we are now considering: towards the wife of his choice he had shown strong affection, while as to the worthless consort who was imposed upon him, however sternly he may have resented her profligacy, we know not that it was provoked by similar profligacy on his part. The prejudices of the Romans were early excited against him, and no reliance can be placed on their malicious assertions that his natural reserve was a mask assumed to conceal the grossest improprieties. On this score, neither history nor anecdote has any story at this time against him: the charge of habitual intemperance rests chiefly upon a ribald epigram, which may have originated in the licence of the camp;<sup>3</sup> while the saying as-

Immorality  
ascribed to Ti-  
berius.

<sup>1</sup> Hor. *Sat.* 1. 2. 63.: "Quid interest in matrona, ancilla, peccesse togata?"

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 85.; Suet. *Tib.* 35. The enactment on this subject, cited by Papinian (*Dig.* xlviii. 5. 10.), is probably that of Tiberius: "Mulier que evitandæ poenæ adulterii gratia lenocinium fecerit aut operas suas scenæ locaverit, adulterii accusari damnarique ex senatusconsulta potest."

<sup>3</sup> Pliny asserts indeed that Tiberius was intemperate in his youth, but admits that no such charge could be laid against him in his latter years. Plin.

cribed to him that a man must be a fool who required a physician after thirty, seems to show that he enjoyed robust and equal health, such as was never maintained through a long life by a confirmed drunkard.<sup>1</sup> Nor can we doubt the untiring perseverance with which Tiberius devoted himself through at least the greater part of his principate to the engrossing cares of his station, cares which above all others demanded a clear head and a sound body. For several years he never quitted the dust and din of Rome for a single day, and his time was given without intermission to the discussions of the senate, to the procedure of the tribunals, to conferences with foreign envoys, and every other detail of his world-wide administration. The charge of profligacy, up to this period, but slightly supported by external testimony, falls to the ground before such strong internal evidence of its falsehood.

But the morality of Tiberius was not confined to abstinence from gross vice, or refraining from luxuries and indulgences which might have been less unsuitable to his position. He was anxious to exhibit the ancient ideal of the Roman statesman in practising the household virtues of simplicity and frugality. His domestic economy, formed on the pattern of Augustus, received additional hardness and severity from the habits of the camp, with which he had been so long familiar. The number of his slaves was limited; the freedmen who managed his private concerns

His simplicity  
and frugality.

*Hist. Nat.* xiv. 28.: "In senectâ jam severus; sed ipsa juvenia ad merum prior fuerat." He tells an anecdote, or rather a popular surmise, which must be taken for what it is worth, that he selected Lucius Piso for the post of prefect of the city on account of his admirable qualities as a boon companion; as for instance, that he could drink for two days and nights without intermission. *Plin. l. c. Comp. Senec. Epist.* 83.

<sup>1</sup> The holding of this paradox, attributed to the great Napoleon and others, always indicates exuberant health and spirits. Suetonius says of Tiberius on this point (*Tib.* 69.): "Valetudine prospera usus est, tempore quidem principatus pæne toto prope illæsa, quamvis a tricesimo ætatis anno arbitratus eam suo rexit, sine adjumento consilioque medicorum." Tacitus (*Ann.* vi. 46.): "Solitus eludere medicorum artes, atque eos qui post tricesimum ætatis annum ad internoscenda corpori suo utilia vel noxia alieni consilii indigerent."

were kept strictly within the bonds of modesty and propriety. Their services were rewarded with exactness, but at the same time parsimoniously; nor did their employer ever surrender to them any portion of his real authority, or allow them undue influence over himself.<sup>1</sup> The carefulness he exhibited in the government of his household was an earnest of the economy of his public administration; and as such the citizens might, at least, have admired it, how ever few imitators it could find among them. But Augustus had had the art of combining personal simplicity with a wise liberality in public matters, which was beyond the conception of his more narrow-minded successor. The people were piqued at the cessation of the largesses which used to flow to them from the coffers of their inimitable favourite. Tiberius, who took no pleasure in the sports of the theatre or circus, and could not, like Augustus, good-humouredly affect it, reduced the salaries of the mimes and the numbers of the gladiators. He lavished no treasures on the decoration of the city, content to execute with scrupulous fidelity the designs his predecessor had left uncompleted. Yet he too could, on worthy occasions, exhibit munificence on an imperial scale. His relief to the ruined cities of Asia was conceived in the spirit of an Augustus or a Julius, and the aid he extended to the decayed scions of noble houses at home showed that he could be generous from policy, as well as sparing from temper.<sup>2</sup> In times of scarcity he did not fail to check the rise of prices, according to the best lights of his day, by compensating the dealers in grain from his own means; and from the same well-managed resources he indemnified the citizens for their losses by the great

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 7.: "Rari per Italiam Cæsaris agri, modesta servitia, intra paucos libertos domus: ac si quando cum privatis disceptaret, forum ac jus." But a darker colour is presently dashed into the modest drab: "quæ cuncta non quidem comi via sed horridus ac plerumque formidatus, retinebat tamen, donec," &c.

<sup>2</sup> Vell. ii. 126.: "Fortuita non civium tantummodo sed urbium damna principis munificentia vindicat."



fire which ravaged the quarters of the Cælius and Aventine.<sup>1</sup> The whole empire reaped abundant fruits from this prudent considerateness, in the undiminished supply of all sources of public revenue, and the opening of new ones. The government was enabled to fulfil every engagement with punctuality: its civil officers, regularly and adequately paid, had no excuse for extortion, its soldiers were kept within the bounds of discipline, and, receiving punctually their daily dole, submitted without a murmur to the labours of the camp and the threats of the centurion.

At the same time, with all his frugality, Tiberius obtained the rare praise of personal indifference to money, and forbearance in claiming even his legitimate dues.<sup>2</sup>

His moderation  
in regard to  
money.

In many cases in which the law enriched the emperor with the property of a condemned criminal he waved his right, and allowed it to descend to the heir. He frequently refused to accept inheritances bequeathed him by persons not actually related to him, and checked the base subservience of a death-bed flattery. With all these genuine merits towards the commonwealth, he was not blind to the advantage he might derive from pretending to another virtue, which ranked high in the estimation of the Romans,

His show of  
deference to  
the senate.

but to which he had no real claim. From the commencement of his principate he affected the most obsequious deference to the state, as represented by the senate, the presumed exponent of its will. His first care was to make it appear to the world that his own pre-eminence was thrust on him by that body, which alone could lawfully confer it. We have seen under what disguises, and by what circuitous processes, he had gradually drawn into his own hands the powers, by which he seemed only seeking to enrich the senate at the expense of every other order. The promptness of its adulation, the proneness

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Tac. *Ann.* ii. 87., iv. 64., vi. 45.; Vell. ii. 130.; Suet. *Tib.* 48. Dion, lviil. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus (*Ann.* iii. 18.) says of him, as before quoted, "Satis firmus, ut sæpe memoravi, adversus pecuniam." Comp. Dion, lviil. 10. 17.

of its servility, he strove to check sometimes with grave dignity, at others with disdainful irony. When it proposed to call the month of November, in which he was born, after his name, as July and August had derived their titles from his predecessors, *What, he asked, will you do if there should be thirteen Cæsars?*<sup>1</sup> He would not allow himself to be called, in the addresses of its members, *Dominus* or *Lord*, as the style of a slave towards his master, nor his employments *Sacred*, as belonging only to divinity; nor, again, would he have it said that he *required* its attendance at his summons. He never entered the Curia with an escort of guards, or even of unarmed dependents, and rebuked provincial governors for addressing their despatches to himself, and not always to the senate.<sup>2</sup> His own communications to the august order were conceived in a tone of the deepest respect and even subservience. *I now say*, he would declare, *as I have often said before, that a good and useful prince should be the servant of the senate, and the people generally, sometimes of individual magistrates.* Such was his demeanour throughout the first years of his government: it was only late, and by degrees, that he drew forth the arm of power from the folds of this specious disguise, and exhibited the princeps to the citizens in the fulness of his now established authority. But even to the last, though capricious and irregular in his behaviour, we are assured that his manner was most commonly marked by this air of deference, and the public weal continued still to be manifestly the ruling object of his measures.<sup>3</sup>

We have here before us the picture of a good sovereign but not of an amiable man. Had Tiberius been so fortunate as to have died at the close of a ten years' principate, he would have left an honourable though not an attractive name in the annals of Rome: he would have represented the Cato Censor of the empire, by the side of the Scipio of Augustus and the

The promise of his reign marred by defects of temper and demeanour.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lvi. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 27. 30. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 29. 33.: "Paulatim Principem exseruit, præstititque, et si varium diu, commodiorem tamen sæpius et ad utilitates publicas priorem."

Camillus of Cæsar. The sternness and even cruelty he had so often exhibited would have gained him no discredit with the Romans, so long as they were exerted against public offenders for the common weal, and for no selfish objects. Even the suspicion which from the first attached to him of having procured the death of Agrippa was probably little regarded: the exile of Augustus was already branded as a monstrous production of nature which ought never to have been reared, and might with little blame be got rid of. But as the fine and interesting features of his person were marred by a constrained and unpleasing mien and expression, so the patience, industry, and discretion of Tiberius were disparaged by a perverse temper, a crooked policy, and an uneasy sensibility. The manners of the man, a martinet in the camp, a clerk in the closet, a pedant in the senate-house, carried with them no charm, and emitted no spark of genius to kindle the sympathies of the nation. The princeps, from his invidious and questionable position, if once he failed to attract, could only repel the inclinations of his subjects. If they ceased to ascribe to him their blessings, they would begin without delay to lay to his charge all their misfortunes. The mystery of the death of Germanicus threw a blight on the fame of Tiberius from which he never again recovered. From that moment his countrymen judged him without discrimination, and sentenced him without compunction. The suspicion of his machinations against Germanicus, unproved and improbable as they really were, kindled their imaginations to feelings of disgust and horror, which neither personal debauchery, nor the persecution of knights and nobles, would alone have sufficed to engender.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, we have seen, had special inducements to do less than justice to Tiberius; nevertheless, his account of the tyrant is not on the whole inconsistent. But there is no part of Dion's history in which he fails so much as in his delineation of this Cæsar's character. It is a mere jumble of good and bad actions, for which the writer sometimes apologizes, and insinuates as his excuse that the author of them was mad. The stories, however, themselves are often extravagant and puerile. Such, for instance, is that of the architect,

who, being sentenced to banishment by Tiberius from mere spite, because he had performed the wonderful feat of straightening an inclined wall, in order to ingratiate himself with the tyrant, threw a glass vessel to the ground, picked up the fragments, and set them together again, whereupon he was immediately put to death, as too clever to be suffered to live. (Dion, lvii. 21. comp. Petronius, *Satyr.* 51. The origin of the story may be traced perhaps to a statement in Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 66.) There is something Oriental in the turn which the fancy of Dion not unfrequently takes.

VOL. V.—11

## CHAPTER XLV.

COMPARISON BETWEEN AUGUSTUS AND TIBERIUS.—SEJANUS USEFUL WITHOUT BEING FORMIDABLE.—DISTURBANCES IN AFRICA AND REVOLT IN GAUL.—OVERTHROW OF SACROVIR (A. U. 774.).—THE TRIBUNITIAN POWER CONFERRED UPON DRUSUS (A. U. 775.).—INTRIGUES OF SEJANUS: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRÆTORIAN CAMP.—DRUSUS POISONED BY SEJANUS (A. U. 776.).—DETERIORATION OF THE PRINCIPATE OF TIBERIUS.—DEATH OF CREMUTIUS CORDUS AND OTHERS.—SEJANUS DEMANDS THE HAND OF LIVILLA, AND IS REFUSED BY TIBERIUS.—HE CONCEIVES THE PROJECT OF WITHDRAWING TIBERIUS FROM ROME.—RETIREMENT OF TIBERIUS TO CAPRÆ (A. U. 780.).—HIS MANNER OF LIFE THERE.—FURTHER DETERIORATION OF HIS GOVERNMENT.—DEATH OF THE YOUNGER JULIA AND OF THE EMPRESS LIVIA (A. U. 782.). (A. U. 774-782. A. D. 21-29.)

I HAVE described the rise and progress of Tiberius to a distinguished eminence among Roman statesmen: I have now to introduce the reader to the decline and fall of his well-earned reputation. The ruin of so fair a character, and the frustration of such respectable abilities and virtues, was not the work of a day, nor the effect of any single crime or failure. The temper of the times and the circumstances of his position presented the most formidable obstacles to a sustained good government, which the Romans had not perhaps the patriotism to appreciate or support. But the honourable ambition of the second princeps to see everything with his own eyes, and execute everything with his own hands, was in fact itself suicidal. Augustus, with the Roman world exhausted and prostrate at his feet, craving only to be moulded by his policy and informed with inspiration from his mouth, had accustomed himself from the first to act by able and trusty ministers. He was wisely

Comparison between Augustus and Tiberius: the man of genius and the man of ability.

A. D. 21.  
A. U. 747.

content to see many things with the eyes of a Mæcenas, to act in many things with the hands of an Agrippa. His bravest auxiliary he ventured generously to connect with himself by the bonds of a family alliance. At a later period he educated the members of his own house to relieve him, one after another, of some of the functions of his station. Tiberius he associated with himself on terms of almost complete equality. But Augustus was a man of genius: he was the soul of the Roman empire: fame, fortune, and conscious ability had inspired him with unwavering self-reliance. It was impossible for his successor, bred in the sphere of an adjutant or an official, to have the same lofty confidence in himself, and to discard with a smile the suggestions of every vulgar jealousy. Tiberius, thoroughly trained in the routine of business, might believe himself competent to the task of government; he might devote himself with intense and restless application to every detail of the public service, and struggle against his overwhelming anxieties with desperate and even gallant perseverance. But he was animated by no inward consciousness of power, and when he felt himself baffled by the odds against him, he could not look round serenely for the help he needed. Those of his own household he repelled from him as enemies, and instead of choosing the ablest counsellor in the fittest quarter, allowed himself to fall under the influence of the nearest and least scrupulous intriguer. Even Sejanus he did not formally appoint as his minister, nor avowedly surrender to him any definite share in his affairs; but he yielded him his own mind and will in all things, let the conduct of the empire slip insensibly out of his own hands, and allowed the world to despise him as the puppet of his own minion.

It has been already represented that Tiberius, from the character of his mind, preferred the services of an obscure and humble client to those of an associate of lofty rank and corresponding pretensions. Accordingly, in giving his confidence to Sejanus, he never contemplated raising him to a position of

The jealousy of Tiberius not alarmed by the inferior origin and talents of Sejanus.

independent authority: on the contrary, he conceived that the meanness of his origin, the subordinate office he filled, and above all, perhaps, the mediocrity of his talents, were a sufficient guarantee against his rising into rivalry with himself.

The imperial family.

The imperial family still flourished with numerous scions: among these his own son occupied the first place; and this prince, since the death of his cousin Germanicus, united every claim of birth, years, and ability

Tiberius and Drusus, consuls.

to share with his father the toils and honours of administration. In the year 774, accordingly,

Tiberius appointed himself consul in conjunction with Drusus, an union, however, of which the citizens, it is said, augured unfavourably: for all the previous colleagues of Tiberius—namely, Varus, Piso, and Germanicus—had perished by violent and shocking deaths.<sup>1</sup> Both in this instance, and in a fifth, which afterwards followed, these forebodings, it will appear, were destined to be fatally fulfilled. A deep gloom was settling on the imperial palace, from whence no light gleamed to cheer the Roman people, and dispel with the prospect of future prosperity the misgivings which now assailed them. The emperor began to betray a disposition for retirement and solitude. The moments he could abstract from the ceaseless pressure of business he devoted to consultation with astrologers and diviners, listening to their interpretation of his dreams, and requiring an exposition of the occult meaning of every sound that reached him, or vision that flashed upon his sight. In order perhaps to secure himself from observation in pursuits which he had interdicted to the citizens, he was now anxious to escape from the city, where his residence had been for many years unbroken, so painful was the assiduity he had bestowed on the details of his vast administration. For this purpose he withdrew to the pleasant coast of Campania, professing that his health required change of scene and alleviation of labour, leaving the conduct of the executive in the hands of Drusus,

though he retained a vigilant supervision of affairs, and constantly explained his views and wishes in despatches addressed to the senate. The behaviour of the young consul, thus watched and guided, seems to have been temperate and judicious. He smoothed the differences Character of Drusus. between the proudest and most turbulent of the nobles; and his interference was the more graceful as it was employed to enforce an act of submission on the part of a Lucius Sulla, a contemporary of his own, towards Domitius Corbulo, a man of greater age and political experience.<sup>1</sup> He checked, as we have seen, the licentious appeal to the imperial majesty as a protection for calumnious railing, and evaded rather than opposed the unseasonable rigour of the reformers, who asked the senate to prohibit the governors of provinces from taking their consorts with them. He had himself, he said, derived much comfort from the society of his own partner in his various military missions, and Livia, still the mirror of Roman matrons, had marched by the side of Augustus from Rome to every frontier of the empire. Drusus at this time was thirty years of age. From his earliest adolescence he had been employed in the career of arms, and he had already been distinguished by a previous consulship in the year 768.<sup>2</sup> He was well known therefore both to the soldiers and the people; and though neither the one nor the other bestowed on him the regard they had lavished on his cousin, he was not on the whole unpopular with either. Even his vices were favourably contrasted with those of his father. He might be cruel and sanguinary in his enjoyment of the sports of the circus; the sharpest of the gladiator's swords received from him the name of Drusian: but this was better, in the popular view, than the moroseness of Tiberius, who evinced no satisfaction in such spectacles at all. He might be too

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 81. This Corbulo must be distinguished from another of the same name, whose exploits and melancholy fate will occupy some of our future pages. He had already filled the office of prætor, and is represented as an elderly personage. The younger Corbulo died nearly fifty years later.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 55.: "Druso Cesare, C. Norbano Coss. A. U. 768."



much addicted to revelry and carousing: but this again was a fault which a few years might correct, and which showed at least some geniality of temper, more amiable than his father's reserve.<sup>1</sup> We have a surer evidence of his merits in the affection in which he had lived with his more popular cousin, and the tenderness he displayed for the bereaved children. Of these the eldest, known by the name of Nero, was now sixteen; the second, Drusus, was younger by a single year; while Caius, the third, was only eleven. The family of Germanicus had consisted altogether of nine, a number apparently very unusual in a Roman household.<sup>2</sup>

Some fresh incursions of Tacfarinas at this period within the borders of the African province induced the emperor to address a missive to the senate, to whom the government attached, requiring it to appoint an efficient proconsul without delay, to undertake the task of finally reducing him. The provinces allotted to the senate were precisely those in which there was least apprehension of serious hostilities, or prospect of the active employment of their governors in the camp. To equip an army for actual service, to select an experienced commander, and send him forth to reap laurels, and perhaps to earn a triumph, was to trench upon the imperial prerogative; the submissive senators shrank from exercising a right which accident had thus put into their hands, and begged to refer the choice to the emperor. With his usual dissimulation, Tiberius affected some displeasure at the duties of the fathers being thus thrown on himself; for he already bore, as he declared, a heavier burden than one man could well sustain. He refused to do more than nominate two candidates, M. Lepidus and Junius Blæsus, between whom he required the senate to make

Renewed disturbances in Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 44., iii. 37.; Dion, *lvii.* 13, 14.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xiv. 28.: "Nec alio magis Drusus Cæsar regenerasse patrem Tiberium ferebatur."

<sup>2</sup> The horrid practice of exposure and infanticide—"Numerum liberorum finire," as Tacitus gently qualifies it (*Germ.* 19.)—has been already referred to. The fact that women bore no distinctive prenomen, is terribly significant. It seems to show how few daughters in a family were reared.

the final selection. Both disclaimed the honour ; but Blæsus was uncle to Sejanus, and for him, as Blæsus appointed pro-consul. was well known, the appointment was actually reserved. The excuses of Lepidus were accordingly accepted ; those of his rival, probably less sincere, were courteously waived ; and the favourite was gratified by the elevation of a kinsman, of no previous distinction, to a place of power, which he might employ perhaps, at some future period, for the advancement of his own fortunes.<sup>1</sup>

The consulship of Drusus was distinguished, however, by commotions of far greater importance in another quarter. The success with which the Germans had defended their liberties against the invaders, had not Revolt in Gaul. been unobserved by the nations, pacified though they were, and bowed to the yoke for three quarters of a century, within the Rhine. For their advantage the discovery seemed to be made that the legions were not invincible ; perhaps they read the secret of this decline of their efficiency in the mutinous spirit which had been manifested in their encampments. The panic which had recently pervaded Italy, the alarm Augustus had himself exhibited, and the violent measure of expelling the dreaded Germans from the city, were taken as a confession of weakness. At the same time the exactions of the fiscal officers were continued and perhaps redoubled ; the demands made for military supplies had become intolerably grievous : at last some chiefs of the native tribes, men who had been distinguished with the franchise of the city, and admitted to the name and clientele of the imperial house, were roused by the general discontent, or their own ambitious hopes, to intrigue against the power of the conquerors. The ramifications of their conspiracy extended, it was said, through every tribe in the country ; its chief centres were among the Belgæ in the north, and the Ædui in the interior ; the most prominent of its leaders in the one quarter bore the Roman appellation of Julius Florus, in the other that of

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* lii, 35.

Julius Sacrovir, a name which seems to mark him as a man of priestly family, and armed, therefore, with all the influence of his proscribed caste. But the measures of the patriot chiefs were disconcerted by the premature outbreak of the Andi and Turones. Sacrovir himself, in order to save appearances, was compelled to head his auxiliary cohorts by the side of the legionaries, and assist in coercing his own imprudent allies. Nevertheless his real sentiments did not escape suspicion; and when he threw off his helmet on the field of battle, in the exuberance, as he protested, of his courage and resolution, some of the rebel captives did not hesitate to declare that he had made himself known to his friends to divert their missiles in other directions. Tiberius was informed of this presumed treachery, but he thought fit to take no notice of it.<sup>1</sup>

The speedy reduction of the Turones and Andi did not suppress the meditated revolt. When the moment arrived

the Belgæ were not unfaithful to their engagements, notwithstanding this discouragement.

Insurrection of  
the Belgæ sup-  
pressed.

Florus gained a few Treviran auxiliaries, and gave the signal for revolt by the massacre of some Roman traders. His ranks were soon swelled by followers of his own clan, and by the needy and oppressed of the surrounding tribes; but unable to make head against the Romans in the field they were driven to seek a refuge in the dense forests of the Ardennes. Here they were surrounded, captured and disarmed, chiefly by the efforts of a personal enemy of Florus, a Gaul who himself bore the name of Julius Indus. Florus now threw himself on his own sword, and the Belgian

insurrection was at once suppressed. The resistance of the Ædui under Sacrovir, who flew at the same time to arms, was more resolute and proved more formidable. The vigour of this tribe was greater, its resources and alliances more considerable, and the forces of

Resistance of  
the Ædui un-  
der Sacrovir.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 40.: "Eodem anno Galliarum civitates ob magnitudinem visis alieni rebellionem cœptare." *Ibid.* 41.: "Tiberius . . . aluit dubitatione bellum."

the Romans were stationed at a greater distance from it. The rumour of the disaffection was even greater than the reality. It was reported at Rome that no less than sixty-four Gaulish states had revolted in a body, that the German tribes had united their forces with them, that the obedience of either Spain was trembling in the balance. The flower of the youth of the entire province was collected in the imperial university at Augustodunum. Arms had been purchased or fabricated in secret, and there were many brave young hands to wield them. The chiefs of every clan were followed to the field by hosts of slaves and clients, very imperfectly equipped; but considerable reliance was placed on the native gladiators, of whom some troops were maintained in the Romanized capital, who were clad in complete chain or scale armour, and were expected to form a firm and impenetrable phalanx.<sup>1</sup> It required a pitched battle, with numerous armies arrayed on both sides, to bring this last revolt to an issue. Nevertheless, when Silius, the Roman general, was at leisure to direct two legions, with their auxiliaries, from their quarters in Belgica, against the centre of this insurrection, its power of resistance was found to be far below the alarm it had created. The Roman soldiers were animated with the most determined spirit; the <sup>Crushed by Silius.</sup> hope of plunder among the opulent cities of the long pacified province nerved their discipline and courage, while the approach of the successors of the Cæsarean conquerors spread dismay among the raw levies of the Gauls. At the twelfth milestone from Augustodunum the insurgents awaited the advance of the Romans.<sup>2</sup> Their main body, consisting chiefly of the naked or light-armed, was speedily broken and put to

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 43.: "Cripellarios vocant." Thierry derives the word from the Gaelic "crup," "resserrer et aussi rendre impotent; crupach et crioplach. perclus, manchot." Thierry, *Gaulois*, iii. 275.

<sup>2</sup> The site of this battle must, in all probability, have been to the north of Augustodunum, on the road into Belgica, from whence the Romans were advancing. It would, therefore, be almost on the spot where Cæsar routed the Helvetii in his first campaign.

flight; the mail-clad stood their ground, because they were unable to shift it; but poles, axes, and pitchforks completed the work of the sword, and once overthrown the iron masses could rise no more.

Sacrovir the Druid, the leader and soul of the rebellion, had effected his escape from the field; but his associates, now

Death of Sacrovir and completion of the war.

cowed and spiritless, refused to defend Angustodunum, and threatened to deliver him into the hands of the victors. Flying from thence to a

neighbouring homestead, he engaged his few faithful companions to sacrifice themselves over his body in mutual combat, having first fired the house, and involved the scene of blood in a general conflagration. It was not till this catastrophe was accomplished that Tiberius could proclaim, in a letter to the senate, the origin and at the same time the completion of the war.<sup>1</sup> He could now afford, without exciting too much apprehension, to give a full and fair account of the recent danger, and to apportion their due meed of praise to his commanders, while he claimed for himself the merit of having directed their movements from a distance. He condescended to excuse himself and Drusus for having allowed an affair of so much moment to be transacted in the field without their own active participation. It was, he felt, something new in the military annals of the republic, that the emperor, the commander of her armies and the minister of her policy, and the consul, the executive instrument of her will, should entrust her vital interests to the hands of tribunes and lieutenants; but the capital was becoming, under the regimen of a single man, of far more importance than the frontiers, and any cause of alarm from abroad must redound with double force on the centre of the empire. Now that the alarm was removed, he added, he might venture himself to quit Rome, and visit the districts so recently disturbed. The

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 47.: "Tum demum Tiberius ortum patratumque bellum senatui scripsit." Velleius (ii. 129.) turns this into a compliment: "Quantas molis bellum . . . mira celeritate compressit, ut ante P. R. vicisse quam belare cognosceret, nuntiosque periculi victoriæ præcederet nuntius!"

senate applauded his sagacity, and decreed a Supplication for the return he promised from his sojourn in a suburban pleasure house, such as had often been tendered for Augustus, after distant and perilous expeditions. The proposal of an individual flatterer, that he should be invited to enter the city from Campania with the honours of an ovation, he declined, not perhaps without some resentment at an excess of officious adulation, which seemed to savour of mockery.

Probably the emperor had no real intention of quitting Italy. His years and increasing infirmities might furnish a colourable excuse; the constant pressure of business close at home was in fact an adequate reason. From day to day the obsequious senators continued to urge him to regulate by his mere

The Tribunitian power conferred upon Drusus, in conjunction with Tiberius.

word every public concern, and as regularly did he reply with formal and diffuse epistles, reproving them for their indolence or timidity, and then proceeding to discuss, balance, and decide the questions submitted to his attention. In the year 775, on the completion of his son's consulship, he desired the senate to confer on him the tribunitian power in conjunction with himself, as Agrippa had been joined with Augustus, and afterwards himself, in the highest of all honorary titles. It was as a mere title indeed rather than a substantive office and function that the jealous emperor meant this dignity to be imparted. As such it might suffice to answer the murmurs he anticipated on the avowal of his own debility. Nevertheless, amidst every outward demonstration of subservience and respect, the new appointment was canvassed in some quarters with freedom, and received with ill-disguised dissatisfaction. The pride, it is said, of the presumptive emperor made him unpopular in the senate; and he was not reputed to have yet fairly earned, though indeed he had served the republic at home and abroad for eight years, a claim to be thus designated as the future autocrat of Rome. The loyalty of the Romans, at least of the proud and querulous nobles, bore still a skin of soft and delicate texture

which might be wounded by the slightest shifting of the trappings in which it had arrayed itself.<sup>1</sup>

But this discontent at the elevation of Drusus, and the complaints that he, at least, had no excuse from age or infirmity for declining the hardships of distant service, to which nevertheless his father did not choose to dismiss him, were prompted or fostered, we may believe, by the artifices of Sejanus. The unparalleled indulgence this man had obtained from his patron only inspired him with the ambition of supplanting the more legitimate object of imperial favour. His influence had acquired the government of Africa for his uncle, and with it the command of an army, and the conduct of an important war. On the successful issue of the campaigns in which

Ambition and  
intrigues of Se-  
janus.

Blæsus was now engaged, and on the final defeat, as he vaunted, of the daring foe, who, though regarded by the Romans as no better than a deserter and a bandit, had presumed to offer terms of accommodation with the emperor on the footing of a rival potentate, Sejanus succeeded in getting him leave to accept the imperatorial title from his soldiers; a military distinction now rarely and reluctantly accorded, treading, as it apparently did, too closely on the imperial designation of the chief of the state himself. Even Augustus had discountenanced the licence earned and claimed by the legions at the close of a well-fought day. Blæsus was the last Roman officer in whose case this military salutation was formally sanctioned by the emperor. It was only as the proconsul of a senatorial province that he could have any pretence for hearkening to it; and it was authorised this last time out of regard only for Sejanus, Tiberius resolving, we may believe, never again to place a nominee of the senate in a position to merit it.<sup>2</sup> It was fitting that the last sur-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 56, 59.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 74. De la Bleterie remarks (*Mém. Acad. Inser.* xxi.) that Cornelius Balbus, the last private citizen who triumphed, and Blæsus, the last who was saluted imperator, were both proconsuls of a senatorial province, the only one in which military operations might be anticipated. The next emperor

living witness of the glories of the ancient Republic should expire with this final flicker of its military independence. At the close of this year, the commencement of the sixty-fourth since the fatal era of Philippi, Junia Tertulla, the niece of Cato, the wife of Cassius, the sister of Brutus, was carried to the resting place of her illustrious house.<sup>1</sup> In her had centred the revenues as well as the traditions of many noble families, and she gratified a just pride by distributing her riches by will among the most distinguished personages of the city, omitting only the emperor himself. Tiberius bore the slight without remark, and permitted the virtues of the deceased to be celebrated in a speech from the rostra, which could not fail to revive the memory of a thousand republican glories. But the leaders of the funeral procession, when they carried before the bier the images of the Manlii, the Quinctii, the Servilii, and the Junii, and of twenty in all of the noblest houses of Rome, were instructed to forbear from exhibiting the busts of Cassius and Brutus, who, in the pithy words of the historian, were in fact all the more remarked for the absence of their illustrious effigies.<sup>2</sup>

Death and ob-  
sequies of Ju-  
nia Tertulla.

The success which had thus far attended the intrigues of Sejanus, had inspired him with hopes the most unbounded. The prefecture of the city, with which he had been invested, was the immediate instrument of the imperial will, and though it had been held before him by Messala, Taurus, and Piso, among the most honoured names in Rome, it was not of a nature to confer either power or dignity itself. But the new adventurer conceived a design of using it to advance an inordinate ambition. Hitherto the soldiers of the prætorian guard, who were placed under his orders, were quartered, nine or ten thousand

Sejanus estab-  
lishes the Præ-  
torian camp.

withdrew the legion of Africa from the command of the senatorial proconsul, and placed it, as we shall see, under an officer of his own appointment.

<sup>1</sup> The battle of Philippi was fought in the autumn of 712.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 76.: "Sed præfulgebant Cassius atque Brutus eo ipso quod æffigies eorum non visebantur."



in number, in small barracks at various points throughout the city, or in the neighbouring towns.<sup>1</sup> Dispersed in these numerous cantonments, they were the less available on a sudden emergency: their discipline was lax, and scattered up and down among the citizens, they were liable to be tampered with by the turbulent or disloyal. Yet Augustus had never ventured on a step so bold and novel as to bring them altogether into a camp, and let the citizens see and number the garrison by which they really were enthralled. He had kept no more than three cohorts or eighteen hundred men in the city or at its gates. It was left for the days of confirmed and all but acknowledged royalty, and the private ambition of a minister, to achieve this regal consummation. Perhaps the terror of the Varian disaster, when the city itself was supposed for a moment to be defenceless against a foreign foe, gave the first excuse for the change which was

Its site and dimensions.

speedily introduced. Beyond the north-eastern angle of the city, and between the roads which sprang from the Viminal and Colline gates, the prefect marked out a regular encampment for the quarters of these household troops. The line of the existing enclosure which was traced about two centuries later, exhibits a rectangular projection, by which the limits of the spot and its dimensions are still ascertained. An oblong space, the sides of which are five hundred and four hundred yards respectively, embracing an area of two hundred thousand square yards, was arranged like a permanent camp for the lodgment of this numerous force.<sup>2</sup> Having collected his myrmidons together, the prefect began to ply them with flatteries and indulgences: he appointed all their officers, their tribunes and

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 2. Dion, 10,000, Tacitus and Suetonius, 9000.

<sup>2</sup> The dimensions of the prætorian camp are given in Bunsen's *Rome*, iii. 2. 359. The ordinary camp, according to the arrangement of Polybius, was a square of  $2077\frac{1}{2}$  English feet for a consular army of two legions, or including allies, 19,200 men. This area would contain 480,000 square yards. See General Roy's *Military Antiquities of the Romans in Britain*. According to the system of Hyginus, in the time of Trajan, the soldiers were packed much more closely.

centurions, and at the same time found means, through the agency of the senate, of advancing his creatures to employment in the provinces. It was strange to see how Tiberius shut his eyes to the manœuvres thus practised before his face. On the most public occasions he loudly proclaimed that Sejanus was *the associate of his own labours*: he permitted his busts and statues to be set up in the theatres and forums, and even to receive the salutation of the soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

Still, notwithstanding these unprecedented marks of favour, and the symptoms they revealed of the emperor's infirmity, Sejanus could not fail to see, in the recent elevation of Drusus, how far his master yet was from contemplating the transfer of empire from his son to a stranger. To remove the rival whom he despaired of supplanting was become necessary for his own security; for Drusus was instinctively hostile to him; he had murmured at his pretensions, unveiled his intrigues, and in the petulance of power had even raised his hand against him.<sup>2</sup> The prince had complained that his father, though having a son of his own, had in fact devolved no small portion of the government on a mere alien. Sejanus, he muttered, was regarded by the people as the emperor's actual colleague: the camp of the prætorians was the creation of his caprice for the advancement of his authority; the soldiers had transferred to him their military allegiance, and his image had been openly exhibited as an object of popular interest in the theatre of Pompeius.<sup>3</sup> Moreover he had already contracted an alliance with the family of the Cæsars by the betrothal of his daughter to a son of Claudius, the surviving brother of Germanicus.<sup>4</sup> But Drusus was married

*Machinations  
of Sejanus  
against Drusus.*

<sup>1</sup> Tac. iv. 2: "Facili Tiberio atque ita prono, ut socium laborum non modo in sermonibus, sed apud Patres et Populum celebraret; colique per theatra et fora effigies ejus, interque principia legionum sineret."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 29.: "Adversis animis acceptum quod filio Claudii socer Sejanus destinaretur." This marriage did not take effect, Drusus, the son of Claudius, dying by a singular accident while yet a child, a few days after the

to a weak and vain woman, whom Sejanus, by affecting a violent passion for her, had succeeded in seducing and attaching vehemently to his interests. Divorcing, as the first step in his designs, his own consort, Apicata, he had extended to Livilla the prospect of marriage with himself, and therewith of a share in the empire to which she encouraged him to aspire. Such at least was the story which was long afterwards revealed by the confessions of their slaves under torture; a story of little value, perhaps, except as displaying the current of popular opinion; for the wife of Drusus, it might be supposed, was already nearer to the throne than the paramour of Sejanus. Probably the unfortunate woman consulted no other tempter than her own passion, and was persuaded to listen to his solicitations for the removal of the obstacle between them.<sup>1</sup> With the help of a confidential physician and a corrupt slave, they contrived, after many delays, to administer poison to the prince, of which he lingered long enough to give his decline the appearance of a casual sickness, brought on, as some imagined, by intemperance.<sup>2</sup>

The loss of the unfortunate son of Tiberius seems to have been attended with none of those passionate regrets which

betrothal. Suet. *Claud.* 27.: "Drusum Pompeii impuberem amisit piro, per lusum in sublime jacto et hiatu oris excepto, strangulatum; cui et ante paucos dies filiam Sejani despondisset." Dion, lx. 32.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 8.: "Sejanus, maturandum ratus, deligit venenum, quo paulatim irrepente, fortuitus morbus adsimularetur: id Druso datum per Lygdum spadonem, ut octo post annos cognitum est." Another version of the story, which Tacitus cannot refrain from repeating, though he acknowledges how little it deserved credit, was, that Sejanus contrived to poison the cup which Drusus was about to present to his father, and warned Tiberius not to accept it; whereupon Drusus, having no suspicion of the fraud, and anxious in his innocence to avert suspicion, himself swallowed the draught. Tiberius, however, was persuaded that he committed the suicide in despair on being discovered. Tac. *Ann.* iv. 10. Such were the fantastic horrors which obtained credence among the citizens, and such wild credulity is perhaps the strongest evidence of their fears and sufferings.

<sup>2</sup> This was the cause, according to Suetonius (*Tib.* 62.), to which Tiberius himself was induced to attribute it.

have thrown a mournful interest over the decease of his nephew. The family of the popular favourite seemed, on the contrary, to gain fresh lustre from the disaster which thus befell the rival branch of the imperial house. No suspicion was aroused, no inquiry at least was made into the cause of the young Cæsar's death. The image of antique fortitude which Tiberius pretended to present, caused some curious remarks, but little admiration, among the soft impulsive people, who had long cast aside the iron mask of their ancient discipline. Entering the senate, where the consuls, in sign of public mourning, had relinquished their place of honour, and were sitting promiscuously on the common benches of the senators, he bade them resume their curule chairs, and declared that for himself, he found his only consolation in the performance, more strict than ever, of his public duties. Tearing himself from the corpse of his child and the embraces of his family, he rushed, with redoubled devotion, into the affairs of the republic. He lamented the extreme age of his mother Livia, his own declining years, now deprived of the support of sons and nephews, and asked leave to recommend to the fathers the last survivors of his hopes, the youthful children of Germanicus. The consuls sprang to their feet, and left the room to conduct the young Nero and Drusus into the assembly. They placed them before the emperor, who taking them by the hand exclaimed: *These orphans I placed under the protection of their uncle, entreating him to regard them as his own. Now that he too is dead, I turn to you, fathers, and adjure you by the gods of our country to receive, cherish, and direct these great-grand-children of Augustus.* Then turning to the young men he added: *Nero and Drusus, behold your parents: in the station to which you have been born, your good and evil are the good and evil of the state.*<sup>1</sup>

In betraying the hollowness of his conduct to a generation keenly alive to an overacted hypocrisy, Tiberius showed

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. iv. 8.: "Ita nati estis ut bona malaque vestra ad rem publicam pertineant."

The Romans  
ridicule Tibe-  
rius's pretend-  
ed offer to re-  
store the re-  
public.

how little he comprehended the character of the times. Augustus might repeat the farce of pretending to restore the Republic; but when the second princeps now proposed, in the fulness of his simulated affliction, to imitate this magnanimity, every feeling of compassion for the loss he deplored and of admiration for his fortitude was overwhelmed by a sense of ridicule. It was a relief to both parties to divert their thoughts with the splendid pageant of a funeral, in which the long line of heroes of the Julian and Claudian houses, from Æneas and the Alban kings on the one side, from Clausus, the Sabine chieftain, on the other, was represented by their genuine or imaginary effigies. Even while Tiberius was pronouncing the expected eulogy on the virtues of the deceased, Sejanus, attending at his side, might be emboldened, by the coolness

The masculine  
virtues of  
Agrippina.

with which the citizens received it, to plan the completion of his schemes by a series of fresh atrocities. The brave Agrippina was not of a character to be corrupted like the weak Livilla: her virtue was invincible, and her vigilance never slept in guarding her children from the perils that environed them. But the circumstances of her bereavement, and the favour which had been extended to her enemy Plancina, had left a fatal impression on her mind. With a rooted distrust of the emperor she joined a bold and no doubt a fierce and violent spirit. Like a true Roman she exercised without fear or shame the national licence of the tongue, and in a court where no whisper was not repeated, proclaimed aloud to every listener the wrongs of which she deemed herself the victim.<sup>1</sup> The fertility with which her marriage had been blest had been long a source of jealousy to the morbid self-love of the empress-mother, which even in extreme age, and though her son had reached the summit of her wishes, was piqued by the maternal taunts of this Niobe of the palace.<sup>2</sup> The court was filled with spies and intriguers, encouraged by Sejanus, with the

<sup>1</sup> Tertull. *Apol.* 25.: "Illa lingua Romana."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 12.

assurance of favour from the emperor himself, to place the worst construction on her words and actions, and to entice her by insidious artifices to utter every sentiment of pride and impatience. To the suspicion that he was hostile at heart to his nephew's family, Tiberius gave perhaps some colour by the moroseness with which he repelled the compliment to them, by which some of his least wary courtiers now sought to gratify him. When the priests directed that vows should be offered for the health of the princeps himself, conjoining therewith the names of Nero and Drusus, he rebuked them impatiently for their unseasonable officiousness. But with his usual maladroitness, the terms he used were such as seemed to imply a feeling of jealousy towards the young men. He complained that to join them with himself in this prayer for the imperial family was to make as much of their health, young and vigorous as they were, as of the grave infirmity of years under which he felt himself to labour. *Did you this*, he peevishly added, *at the request of Agrippina, or were you moved to it by her menaces?* When they protested warmly against either imputation, he recollected himself, and confined himself to a moderate rebuke, at the same time desiring the senate to abstain henceforth from exciting a giddy ambition by premature distinctions.<sup>1</sup> Sejanus followed in his master's key, and declared his alarm lest the state should be split into factions by the partisans of Agrippina and her children. He even recommended measures for reducing the influence of certain nobles who had shown most alacrity in serving them. Tiberius, sore and vexed with himself and all about him, acquiesced in every counsel his only favourite administered to him: he showed his ill-humour by a captiousness which could never refrain from bitter speeches even on the most trifling occasions. Disregard and sympathy seemed to be equally distasteful to him. When the citizens of Ilium sent envoys to condole with him on the death of Dru-

Tiberius apparently jealous of the family of Germanicus.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. iv. 17.

sus, a deputation which could not reach him till some months after the event, he condoled with them in return for the loss of their excellent countryman Hector.<sup>1</sup>

The year 776, the ninth of Tiberius, is marked by Tacitus as the turning point in character of the second principate.

Deterioration  
of the princel-  
pate of Tibe-  
rius from the  
year 776.

Up to this time the government, he affirms, had been conducted with honour and advantage to the commonwealth; and thus far the emperor, he adds, might fairly plume himself on his domestic felicity, *for the death of Germanicus he reckoned among his blessings, rather than his afflictions.* From that period, however, fortune began to waver: sorrows and disappointments harassed him and soured his temper: he became cruel himself, and he stimulated cruelty in others.<sup>2</sup> The mover and contriver of the atrocities which followed, it was allowed on all hands, was the wretched Sejanus. Their instruments were the corrupt and profligate courtiers, who pressed forward to earn the rewards of delation, and soon outstripped by their assiduity even the ardour of Sejanus himself. While the intrigues of the aspiring favourite were directed against the friends and allies of the family of Germanicus, Tiberius was perhaps unconscious, in his retirement, of the secret machinations of the prefect, and seemed to wonder more and more at the zeal of his subjects in hunting down all whom they presumed to be his enemies, and bringing them to condign justice. His personal fears, and by this time the selfishness of his character, had degenerated into excessive timidity, were constantly excited by the pretended discovery of plots against him. The wife of Silius, the pacifier of Gaul, was a friend of Agrippina; her husband accordingly was marked out for the first victim, and accused of the gravest crimes against the state.<sup>3</sup> It was affirmed that he had connived at the ripening pro-

Fate of C. Silius.

Suet. Tib. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. iv. 1.: "Cum repente turbare fortuna cœpit; sevir ipse aut servientibus vires præbere."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. Ann. iv. 19.

jects of Sacrovir, instead of crushing the conspiracy in the germ: even when victorious, his triumph, it was insinuated, was sullied by selfish cupidity, and the faithful subjects of the empire had been made to groan under exactions which should have been confined to those who had joined in the rebellion. Such, it was said, were the vehemence and pertinacity with which these charges were pressed upon him, that despairing of his defence, he anticipated the inevitable sentence by a voluntary death.<sup>1</sup> He was not perhaps wholly innocent. But his wife, moreover, was driven into banishment; and the emperor's appetite for prosecution was at length whetted, to the great satisfaction of the delators, by the rich plunder which he was persuaded to taste. The treasures which Silius was convicted of having extorted from the provincials were in no case restored to them. Among the throng of courtiers who sought to gratify the government by enhancing the penalties of the condemned, the only course which remained for the best and wisest senators was to mitigate indirectly the dangers of the accused, by restricting the rewards of delation. M. Lepidus earned distinction in this small but honourable band by the proposal,

A. D. 25.  
A. U. 778.

which was, however, probably ineffectual, that the profits of the accusers should be limited to one fourth of the culprit's fortune, while the remainder was to be restored to his guiltless children. It was deemed worthy of remark, amidst so many instances of servility in the nobles and jealousy in their masters, that such a proposal should have been made at all, and made without being resented. Tacitus, as a disciple of the school of the fatalists, of which the language at least was fashionable in his day, is constrained on this oc-

<sup>1</sup> The object of this suicide, a course to which we shall find the accused not unfrequently resort, was the hope of preventing the confiscation of property which would follow upon a judicial sentence. Silius, whatever gains he had acquired in his province, had been enriched by the liberality of Augustus, and in seizing upon his fortune for the *fiscus*, Tiberius for the first time showed an appetite for personal lucre: "*Prima erga pecuniam alienam diligentia.*" Tac. *Ann.* iv. 20.



casation to inquire whether the favour or hostility of princes is a matter of mere chance and destiny, or whether there may not still be room for prudent counsel and good sense in the conduct of human affairs; whether a secure path of life, however hard to trace, might not still be discovered amidst the perils of the times, between the extremes of rude independence and base servility.<sup>1</sup> The great defect of the Romans at this period lay in their want of the true self-respect which is engendered by the consciousness of sober consistency. Bred in the speculative maxims of Greek and Roman republicanism, they passed their manhood either in unlearning the lessons of the schools, or in exaggerating them in a spirit of senseless defiance.

Silius, it would seem, had laid himself open to the attacks of the informers, and there were others against whom the favourite's intrigues were directed, whose public crimes or personal vices had alienated from them the compassion of the citizens. Nevertheless another of his victims seems to have been a man of real merit, though not of such a description as to engage for him a great amount of popular sympathy. Cremutius Cordus, a follower of the Stoic philosophy, had composed the Annals of the Roman Commonwealth during the period of the Civil Wars. He had praised the patriotism of Brutus, and had called Cassius *the last of the Romans*, a phrase which, under the circumstances of the time, was not a mere speculative inquiry, but a pungent incentive to violence. Augustus, indeed, had actually perused the volume, and though he found in it no panegyric on himself, did not complain of it as disloyal or dangerous. But Augustus was strong in the affections of his people, and could afford to disregard the sophisms of the most vehement of declaimers. Tiberius was far from sharing the confidence of his prede-

Prosecution  
and suicide of  
Cremutius Cor-  
dus.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 20.: "Unde dubitare cogor fato et sorte nascendi, ut cætera, ita Principum inclinatio in hos, offensio in illos: an sit aliquid in nostris consiliis, liceatque inter abruptam contumaciam et deforme obsequium pergere iter periculis et metu vacuum"

cessor. He felt or fancied every moment that he felt his throne tottering; but this very sense of weakness induced him to abstain from any act which might arouse the people from the lethargy into which they had fallen. It was not till the conduct of affairs came into the hands of a minister with personal ends to serve, that such experiments were made on the general patience, as the prosecution of a respectable citizen, like Cremutius, for the expression of a political opinion. The accusers were clients of Sejanus, and though we know not what was the special object of the favourite's hostility, we may suppose that the philosopher was known as a partisan of Agrippina. Whatever, however, was his real crime, the charge against him was that of exciting the citizens to rebellion; a charge which no judge in modern times could deem to be rebutted by the reply that the ostensible objects of his praise had been dead seventy years. To urge as an argument that Augustus had tolerated his language a little while before was merely trifling: every government must judge of the licence that may be granted to hostile criticism, and the circumstances of the later period were essentially different from those of the earlier. But the victim of Sejanus had no security for a fair trial, a reasonable hearing, or a temperate sentence. He provoked his judges and aggravated his offence by anticipating injustice by violence. Cremutius, now an old man, having delivered himself of a speech, such perhaps as Tacitus ascribes to him, full of bitter invective against the government and the times, went home without awaiting the proceedings with which he was threatened, and put an end to his own life by starvation. His books were ordered to be burnt; but some copies of them were preserved, and all the more diligently studied by the few who had secreted them.<sup>1</sup>

It must be remembered that in the peculiar position of Tiberius, policy required him to give wide scope to individ-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 54, 35. Comp. *Suet. Tib.* 61.; *Calig.* 16.; *Dion.* lviil. 24.; *Senec. Consol. ad Marc.* 1. 22.

Tiberius inter-  
feres to check  
the delators.

ual action in matters that did not immediately concern his own power and security. For the persecution of citizens by citizens he was not at least legally responsible: and it was one of those shadows of liberty which he was careful in conceding, to allow his subjects the gratification of their private enmities before the ordinary tribunals. The peculiar constitution of the Roman legal procedure, which permitted and indeed urged every citizen to assume the character of a public prosecutor, served to exonerate the chief of the state, in the view of his own countrymen, from a large portion of the odium which later ages have cast upon him. At the same time the firmness he occasionally exhibited, in spontaneously interposing to check the licentiousness of his people, was regarded by the citizens as a token of extraordinary consideration, and continued to secure him, among so many motives they had for disliking him, no small share of their respect and even favour. Thus, when Plautius Sylvanus, a prætor, was hurried before him, on the charge of having murdered his wife, and pleaded that she had, unknown to him, laid violent hands on herself, he marched direct to the chamber of the accused, and satisfied himself by personal examination of the unquestionable signs it exhibited of a struggle and murder. Such vigour and presence of mind could not fail to make a favourable impression on the multitude.<sup>1</sup> When Salvianus brought a charge against a noble citizen on the day of the Latin Feriæ, he resented the desecration of that holy season, and caused the intemperate accuser to be himself banished.<sup>2</sup> Again, when Serenus was condemned for seditious intrigues, on the accusation of his unnatural son, and the senate proceeded without hesitation to sentence him to death, Tiberius interposed to annul the decree, and desired his precipitate judges to pass a second vote. Hereupon Asinius Gallus proposed that, instead of death, the criminal should be relegated to the isle of Gyarus or Donusa; and again Tiberius, observing

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 22., A. U. 777.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 36., A. U. 778.

that those barren rocks were destitute even of water, declared that where life was conceded the necessities of life ought not to be withheld.<sup>1</sup> In the case of a knight named Cominius, who had been condemned for the publication of libellous verses against himself, he extended to the convicted criminal a free pardon.<sup>2</sup> Such instances of lenity might contrast favourably with the relentless ferocity of the nobles towards one another; they allowed the citizens still to believe that in the dangerous times on which they had fallen, their best protection lay in the chief of the commonwealth, elevated by his station above the ordinary passions of the envious and malignant among themselves. They were full of gratitude to him also for the good fortune which seemed to attend on his public administration. He had been enabled to suppress, by a happy accident, an alarming insurrection of slaves in Apulia, the nurse of servile seditions.<sup>3</sup> The year 777 had witnessed the final pacification of Africa.<sup>4</sup> While the emperor, out of compliment perhaps to the success attributed to Blæsus, had imprudently withdrawn a large part of the forces in the province, and encouraged the restless Tacfarinas to renew his attempts in that quarter, the gallantry of the new proconsul Dolabella had sufficed to bring the enemy to bay, to overpower and reduce him to self-destruction. The citizens rejoiced at this consummation of a tedious and expensive warfare, which had sometimes threatened their supplies, and were proud at beholding an embassy from the re-

The Romans acknowledge the good fortune of his administration.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 30. The treatment of the exiles seems generally to have been sufficiently mild. They seem to have been allowed to a great extent the choice of their island; and when Augustus forbade them to settle at any spot within fifty miles of the continent, he excepted the pleasant retreats of Cos, Rhodes, and Lesbos. He also confined them to a single vessel of a thousand amphoræ and two pinnaces for the voyage and conveyance of their families, which further were limited to twenty slaves or freedmen. Dion, lvi. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 31., A. U. 777.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 27., A. U. 777.

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 28.: "Is demum annus populum Romanum longo adversum Numidam Tacfarinatam bello absolvit."

mote Garamantes, which came to solicit their clemency. Such, however, was the influence of Sejanus that Tiberius refused the triumphal ornaments to the victor, in order not to dim the lustre of the honours already accorded to the favourite's uncle.<sup>1</sup> But in the provinces, where the genuine merits of the emperor were known without those drawbacks which were but too notorious at Rome, his popularity was perhaps unalloyed. When he insisted on referring to the senate the charge of malversation, which the people of Asia brought against his procurator, and the fathers, thus encouraged, ventured to condemn the culprit, the grateful provincials decreed a temple to Tiberius in conjunction with Livia and the Senate of Rome. This example was about to be followed by the people of Further Spain: but on this occasion the emperor declined the honour; an act of modesty for which he acquired little credit, at least among his own countrymen, who regarded it as pusillanimous and mean. *The best of mortals, they complacently urged, had ever aspired to the highest distinctions; thus Hercules and Bacchus among the Greeks, and Quirinus among the Romans, had sought and gained a place among the gods of Olympus: Augustus had lived a hero's life in the hopes of such an apotheosis. Princes, they said, may command the present, but it should be their dearest ambition thus to take pledges for the future; indifference to fame is in fact a disregard of virtue.*<sup>2</sup>

At the extraordinary elevation to which he had now arrived, the head of the favourite began to whirl, and to his fevered imagination the utmost objects of his ambition seemed almost within reach. Once admitted within the pale of the Cæsarean family, there would be no distinction, divine or human, which he might not expect to fall on him. The last and most arduous step yet to be effected by his own happy boldness, was to secure his entrance therein by marriage with the widow of Drusus. If he had any hesitation at the last moment in tak-

Sejanus demands of Tiberius the hand of Livilla.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. iv. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. iv. 38.: "Contemptu famæ contemni virtutes."

ing the plunge which must mar his fortunes, if it failed to make them, the instances of Livilla herself, the partner of his guilt and the depository of his secret, could not safely be disregarded; the impatience of the woman overcame the last lingering scruples of his discretion. Sejanus composed an address to the emperor; for Tiberius, shy and ever fearful of committing himself, had now adopted the custom, most foreign to the free-spoken habits of the Roman nobles, of requiring every suit to be made to him in writing. *The favour of Augustus, urged the suitor, in the first instance, and latterly the many tokens of approbation he had received from his successor, had taught him ever to confide his wishes to the ears of the prince, even before disclosing them to the immortal gods. For splendid honours he had never sued; to watch and toil in the ranks for the safety of his imperator was his privilege and pleasure. Nevertheless he had attained the fairest of all distinctions, in being associated in many public functions with the Cæsar himself. This was the foundation of his present hopes. Augustus, he had heard, in seeking to establish his daughter, had deigned to review the order of Roman knighthood. Were a husband now required for Livilla, would not Tiberius cast his eye upon a friend, one pledged to be content with the glory of such a connection, and never to renounce the laborious duties already laid upon him. For his own part, he should be amply satisfied with the security he should thus obtain against the malice of Agrippina, and that for his children's sake, not for his own; for himself it was enough, and more than enough, to have lived so long in the intimacy of a prince so illustrious.*

Tiberius, on receiving this application, which appears to have been wholly unlooked for, penned a hasty answer at the moment, in which he praised the regard Sejanus had ever shown him and referred slightly <sup>His suit is re-</sup>jected. to the favours with which he had, on his own part, requited it. *He desired, he said, a short time to consider the matter more fully; and finally replied, that, while other men were permitted to look solely to their own advantage, princes in all*

*affairs of moment must have regard to the opinion of the world. Accordingly, he continued, he would not resort to the answer which lay easiest and nearest at hand—namely, that it was for Livilla herself to determine whether, after Drusus, she would wed another, or continue to bear her adverse fortune under the roof of her father-in-law; further, that she had a mother and a grandmother, advisers nearer than himself;—no, he would act more straightforwardly, and represent in person to his friend the objections which really militated against his suit. The passions of Agrippina, he would remind him, would unquestionably break out more vehemently than ever, if the marriage of Livilla should sever the imperial family; the rivalry of the women of Cæsar's house would undermine the fortunes of his children. Sejanus, he added, was deceived if he imagined that it was possible for him to remain in his present modest rank. Once wedded to a Caius Cæsar, and again to a Drusus, his new wife would never deign to end her career in alliance with a simple knight. Could the emperor himself permit it, did he think that the Roman people would endure it, who had witnessed her brother, her father, and their noble ancestors all crowned successively with the highest honours of the state? Was it true that Augustus had for a moment contemplated the union of his daughter with the knight Proculus, yet to whom did he actually espouse her?—first, to the illustrious Agrippa, and, secondly, to Tiberius himself, to the man, in short, whom he had destined for his successor. But in saying this the emperor felt that he touched on delicate ground. Sejanus was too useful to be discarded, too formidable to be driven to despair, and he dared not directly cut off from him even the audacious hope of association in the empire, or of succession to it. Accordingly he concluded with fair words, hinting that he had yet more important confidences in store for the friend of his bosom, and that no distinction was in fact too great for his transcendent merits, when the proper time should arrive for worthily acknowledging them.'*

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. iv. 39, 40.

If such was the language Tiberius really held, I see no reason to doubt its sincerity. It was his habit to provide for present exigencies by any artifice that offered, but to leave the more distant future to circumstances. I do not imagine that he had formed at this period any deliberate intention of thwarting the ambitious views of his favourite, or had destined any one of his own kindred to the succession. But he shrank with a selfish instinct from encouraging in any quarter hopes which might get beyond his control, and again, he was alarmed at the consequences of too abruptly quashing them; so that between the one apprehension and the other, his whole study was to keep the presumptions of those around him in a state of perpetual suspense. This was the Tiberian scheme of policy. Let those who describe Tiberius as a man of consummate ability and penetrating genius, represent it, if they can, as something eminently deep and subtle: to me it seems to bear the impress of great moral infirmity, while its execution was as clumsy as its conception was feeble. It may be questioned, however, whether this occurrence, the account of which I have taken, with all other historians, from Tacitus, is after all correctly represented. Sejanus, we are given to understand, was too well versed in courts, and familiar with the forms of an official refusal, to retain after receiving this answer any portion of his hopes: he regarded it, further, as the token of a settled enmity and design for disgracing him. Yet it would seem, in point of fact, that even after this rebuff he was not forbidden to cherish still his brilliant anticipations, and that at a later period Livilla was suffered to enter at least into betrothal with him.<sup>1</sup> Nor, according to the statements of Tacitus himself, did he exhibit at the time any signs of despair. He proceeded without a pause to repair

Alarm and renewed intrigues of Sejanus.

<sup>1</sup> Dion (lviii. 7.) calls her afterwards his *μελλονυμφος*, which seems to imply her being actually betrothed; and we can put no less definite meaning certainly on the phrase *gæner*, which is implied to him in the fragment, obscure and corrupt it is true, of Tac. *Ann.* v. 6. I am compelled to suspect that Tacitus has sacrificed the truth to introduce this interesting dramatic interlude.



the broken meshes of his intrigues; and while he postponed, at least for the moment, his views of an imperial alliance, he revolved new plans for making doubly sure the impending ruin of his rival Agrippina. But he was anxious to remove the emperor from the constant sight of the pomp with which he continued to surround himself, of the crowds that haunted his levees, and proclaimed aloud that he was the real fountain of all imperial favour: on the one hand he feared the jealousy of his master; on the other, it was hardly less dangerous for the favourite to waive the importunate admiration of sycophants and courtiers. To divert the one and yet retain the other, one means only presented itself, namely, to induce the emperor to quit the arena of public life, and bury himself in a distant retreat, whence all his orders would pass through the hands of the minister.<sup>1</sup> The immediate attendants of the emperor were properly his centurions and tribunes; these were the sentinels at his chamber-door, the companions of his daily exercises; by their hands every letter to the consuls or senators would be conveyed: and Sejanus, as captain of the prætorians, and the source of favour and promotion among them, could thus keep close watch upon the correspondence of his chief, as soon as he should have debarred him from personal intercourse with the citizens.

The repeated excursions Tiberius had now made from Rome, and his long continued cessations from the irksome routine of residence in the city, had confirmed his inclination for indolence and retirement; nor was there any difficulty in persuading him that his increasing infirmities demanded repose, after so many years of labour. But before he betook himself to the retreat he had perhaps long contemplated for his old age, some striking scenes of anger and recrimination occurred between him and Agrippina, which confirmed and

Quarrel between Tiberius and Agrippina.

A. D. 26.  
A. U. 779.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 41.: "Sejanus non jam de matrimonio, sed altius metuens . . . huc flexit ut Tiberium ad vitam procul Roma amœnis locis degendam impelleret. Multa quippe providebat . . ."

exasperated whatever ill feelings subsisted between them. Among the attacks and insults which were hazarded against the wretched princess by the suitors for the favour of Sejanus, was the prosecution of her cousin Claudia Pulchra by a noble delator, on a charge of adultery combined with majesty.<sup>1</sup> It was affirmed that she had sought to employ poison against the emperor's life, as well as the more subtle influence of charms and incantations. When the trial came on, Agrippina rushed into the emperor's presence, at a moment when he was in the act of sacrificing to his father's divinity. *Should the same man, she exclaimed, offer victims to Augustus, and also persecute his children?* To this blunt address she added a shower of invectives against him, together with vehement protestations of her kinswoman's innocence. Forgetting for once, under this unexpected attack, the pertinaacious reserve in which he was wont to wrap himself, Tiberius at last broke silence with a Greek quotation, implying, *Must I be denounced as a tyrant because you are not a queen?*<sup>2</sup> Rebuffed by this cold sarcasm, Agrippina retired hastily to her chamber, and flung herself on her couch, where rage and mortification, combined with the news of Claudia's condemnation, threw her into a dangerous fever. When Tiberius visited her sick-room, the poor creature's spirit was so much broken, that she burst into tears, and implored him to take pity on her solitary state by giving her a husband to support and defend her. She was still young, she said, and might become again a mother, and brought up in all the dignity of Roman matronhood, she could find no solace except in a lawful husband. There were many nobles, she remarked,

<sup>1</sup> Lipsius cannot trace the origin of this Claudia, or her affinity with Agrippina. She is called her *sobrina*, i. e. cousin by the mother's side; and from her name I conceive that she was descended from the Claudia, daughter of P. Clodius Pulcher, to whom Augustus was originally affianced, and whose husband is not known. Her only real connexion with the imperial family lay in the union of her son Quintilius Varus with a daughter of Agrippina and Germanicus.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 52: "Correptamque Græco versu admonuit: non ides lodi quia non regnaret."

who would proudly assume the right of protecting the widow and children of Germanicus. Tiberius, thus abruptly solicited on a point which deeply concerned his policy, might have replied in nearly the same terms as those he had addressed to Sejanus: his duty to the state, as Tacitus himself allows, would not suffer him to countenance a request which must issue in fresh jealousies and enmities between the members of the imperial family. But he did not choose to reveal to an impatient woman the apprehensions to which the accomplishment of her wishes would subject him, or make the humiliating confession that he could not venture in all respects to follow the exalted policy of Augustus: lest he should give an opening for inconvenient discussion, he left her, in his awkward way, without speaking a word. The scene which thus passed in the recesses of the palace was not generally disclosed, but was recorded in her private memoirs by the daughter of Agrippina herself, a personage of whom I shall have much to relate hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

In the height of her distress, and when the vexations of her position had thrown her more than ever off her guard, Sejanus contrived to instil fresh and yet more shocking suspicions into the mind of the unfortunate princess, which served only to complete the disgust and alienation of Tiberius. The minister's creatures ventured, under the guise of friendly care for her, to insinuate that her uncle was seeking an opportunity of poisoning her, and enjoined her to avoid partaking of food at his table. The widow of Germanicus was residing under the roof of the head of the Cæsarean family: there was no separate establishments for princes or princesses of the blood

Suspicious  
against Tiberius  
instilled  
into the mind  
of Agrippina.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 53.: "Quæ Neronis principis mater vitam suam et casus snorum posteris memoravit." It is natural to surmise that the revelations of the palace which our historians relate, are derived in a great measure from these family memoirs, and it is impossible to overlook the probability that the conduct both of Tiberius and Sejanus would be seriously misrepresented by an hereditary enemy to both. At a later period I shall have occasion to show more particularly how another history appears to have been vitiated by the same writer's unscrupulous malice.

imperial ; but it was only on special occasions, perhaps, that the emperor invited the females of his house to sup in company with him. Agrippina had neither the temper nor the art to dissemble. Reclining by the side of her host, she rejected every dish presented to her with cold and impassive mien, and without excuse or observation. Tiberius could not fail to remark her behaviour, nor to guess its motive. To assure himself, he offered her some apples with his own hand, recommending their flavour ; but she, all the more confirmed in her suspicions, handed them untasted to the attendants. Hereupon Tiberius turned to his mother on the other side, and muttered that none could wonder at any show of harshness in his conduct towards one who scrupled not to intimate her apprehensions of his intent to poison her. The incident was speedily noised abroad, and the rumor prevailed that he was actually meditating her destruction, and, not daring to effect it by public process before the face of the citizens, was contriving secret means of assassination.<sup>1</sup>

Informed by his spies of the whispers thus circulating among his subjects, Tiberius was annoyed, if not seriously alarmed. He tried to give another current to men's thoughts, and directed their attention to the curious rivalry now presented by eleven chief communities of the province of Asia, each of which sought to approve itself the worthiest claimant for the honour of erecting a temple to Rome and her glorious emperor. The pretensions they severally advanced were all nearly similar, appealing to the splendour of their mythological origin, as founded by some Jove-descended hero, to their connexion with Troy, the reputed parent of Rome herself, or to their well-attested fidelity to their conquerors. The claims of Hypæpe, Tralles, Laodicea, Magnesia, Pergamus, Ephesus, Sardis, and others, were heard successively ; but all were finally postponed to those of

Eleven cities of Asia contend for the honour of making Tiberius their tutelar divinity.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 54.

Smyrna, whose people had crowned their merits towards the Republic by stripping the raiment from their own backs to supply the necessities of Sulla's army. Tiberius attended in the senate throughout these discussions, which were protracted for several days, and showed himself more busy and active in public matters than had been usual with him for some time past.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, he had been long meditating a final retirement from Rome; and the increasing suspicions and even offensive remarks of the citizens tended no doubt to ripen this resolution. Five years before he had allowed himself to be absent for a whole twelvemonth in Campania: he now sought the same retreat once more; but this time he probably determined in his own mind never again to return. The motives of this determination were variously assigned by the ancients, and it is probable that more than one com-

Tiberius meditates retiring from the city.

bined to produce a resolution so important. We may believe that it was at least partly owing to the influence of Sejanus, who desired, as has been before observed, to withdraw his jealous master from the daily sight of his favourite's undue pre-eminence. It is possible also that Tiberius may have been anxious to escape from the dominion his mother still continued to exercise over him; for he was conscious that he owed the empire to her influence over Augustus, or so at least she was herself firmly persuaded, and never allowed him to forget it. It seems probable, however, that he was thus driven into solitude by the infirmity of his own temper; by his dislike of the show, and trappings of public life; by the shyness which was natural to him, and which had been undoubtedly increased to a morbid degree by the long and painful solitude of his banishment at Rhodes. As he grew older he seemed more to lose his presence of mind in public; and if sometimes a senator broke out into invectives against him, or assailed him with unseasonable questions, he became confused and

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 55, 56. That the temple was to be specially dedicated to Tiberius, though not mentioned in this place, appears by comparing it with *cc.* 15. 37.

agitated. His temper was exasperated by the imputations made or insinuated against him, and the charge of severity in his judgment on criminals piqued him to actual ferocity, which afterwards all the more distressed and alarmed him.<sup>1</sup> For this retirement he had been, as we have seen, a long time preparing, and the motives which now impelled him to it were, we may suppose, the same which had long been familiar to his thoughts, to which increasing years had given strength and poignancy. The bitterest of his enemies, however, declared that he had no Motive ascribed to him. other wish than to exercise in secret the cruelty and atrocious lewdness to which, they asserted, he was utterly abandoned; or that he was ashamed of exhibiting to the public gaze the ungraceful leanness of his bent and shrivelled figure, the baldness of his forehead, and a face deformed by spots and pimples, or the patches with which he concealed them.<sup>2</sup> We have already seen reason for questioning the habitual intemperance and dissoluteness of Tiberius, to which such disfigurements as these were popularly imputed; but the prejudice against him was deeply rooted in the minds of the Romans, and was confirmed by repeated stories of the blackest colour, and the disgust at the horrid monster expressed, it was said, by every woman to whom he made his loathsome advances.

The immediate pretext for quitting Rome was the object of dedicating temples recently erected to Jupiter at Capua, and to Augustus at Nola, the spot from whence Tiberius quits Rome. the late emperor had ascended into the heavens.<sup>3</sup> It was in the year 779 that Tiberius slunk, as it were, out of the city, with only a single senator, named Cocceius Nerva, in attendance upon him, nor, besides Sejanus himself, more

<sup>1</sup> Compare particularly the story in Tac. *Ann.* iv. 42.: "Cæsar objectam sibi adversus reos inclementiam eo pervicacius amplexus."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 57.: "Erant qui crederent in senectute corporis quoque habitum pudori fuisse." He was now (A. U. 779) in his sixty-seventh year. "Traditur etiam matris impotentia extrusum."

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 45.

than one knight.<sup>1</sup> The rest of his retinue was composed of a few men of learning, chiefly Greeks, and some of them, no doubt, astrologers. The departure of the chief of the state from the centre of government, except to command armies abroad, or during the recess of business allowed in the summer heats, had been so unusual, that, while the emperor's real intentions were still confined to his own bosom, the vulgar were busy in conjecturing the result, and the searchers of the heavens, ever faithful interpreters of the popular instinct, whispered that their art revealed to them that he was destined never to return. It was dangerous to give publicity to such surmises, which the sanguine and impatient shaped readily into the assurance that his death was at hand, and so brought many into trouble on the charge of anticipating the prince's decease.<sup>2</sup> The conjecture, indeed, proved literally correct, though not in the way that was anticipated. Tiberius never again entered Rome: but no man, says Tacitus, could have imagined that a Roman would voluntarily abandon his country for a period of eleven years.

Harsh, indeed, and unreal the historian's phrase may appear to our notions, *to abandon one's country*, or, more strongly still, *to exist without a country*, thus applied to a citizen quitting the walls of Rome to reside in a suburban retreat on the coast of Campania.<sup>3</sup> Doubtless we may trace in it something of an affection of antique sentiment, from which Tacitus is by means always exempt, not strictly in accordance with the genuine feelings of the time. We have seen, indeed, how deeply Cicero was moved at the thought of quitting the neighbourhood of his beloved city. His sensibility was more acute than other men's, but it only pointed in the same direction as theirs. The levity of Milo on the occasion of his ban-

What the Romans meant by "*patria carere*," abandoning one's country.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 58.: "Ferebant periti coelestium, iis motibus siderum excessisse Roma Tiberium ut reditus illi negaretur; unde exitii causa multis fuit, primum finem vitæ conjectantibus vulgantibusque."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 58.: "Ut libens patria careret."

ishment caused, perhaps, some revulsion in the sympathy of his party with him. Even in the camp of Pompeius the fugitive patriots could scarcely retain their assurance that they were still genuine Romans.<sup>1</sup> But we have seen how desperate was Cicero's affliction at being exiled beyond the seas; how loath he was to follow the self-expatriated consuls; how anxious at the first moment to make his peace with the conqueror and return; how, in the last crisis of his fortunes, the imminent perils of his post at Rome could not induce him finally to desert it. Cicero would have been hardly less unhappy in a Campanian retirement than in Greece or Macedonia, if doomed irrevocably to sojourn among its foreign associations; for in this respect the change from Rome to Naples was hardly less complete than that to Rhodes or Athens. The Greek cities of Campania were, as we have seen before, in almost every particular, accurate and vivid copies of those beyond the sea: their foreign manners and habits, attractive as they were to the world-worn seeker for amusement and relaxation, were reputed by every true Roman altogether unworthy of his constant adoption. Rome was the proper sphere of his business and duty, the shrine of the gods, the sacred soil of the auspices, the tribunal of the laws, the stative camp of the warrior nation. There the Roman girded himself for the work of his great moral mission, to spare the subject, but beat down the proud; elsewhere he might loose his robes and put off his sandals, and indulge in recreations, which his conscience, strictly questioned, could scarcely distinguish from vices.<sup>2</sup> *To play the Greek*, for which his vocabulary furnished him with a short expressive term, was in

<sup>1</sup> The arguments of Lucan against this sentiment are not unimportant. *Pharsal.* v. 26.: "Rerum nos summa sequetur

Imperiumque comes . . . non unquam perdidit ordo

Mutato sua jura solo . . .

Ordine de tanto quisquis non exsulat, hic est."

<sup>2</sup> Thus Cæsar was reproached as "*puer male præcinctus*." The loose trailing of his toga in the forum was objected to Mæcenas. Such a want of etiquette was reputed a token of dissoluteness of morals. Suet. *Ner.* 51.: "Adco



his view pleasant but wrong: <sup>1</sup> it might be excused in the overwrought statesman, in the exhausted soldier, in the mere thoughtless youth; but only as an exception to the common rule of life and conduct, as a rare holiday breaking the stern routine of daily practice, to which his birth and breeding devoted him. The Roman must live and die in harness. An Atticus renounced with the forms and duties of Roman life most of the rights and privileges of a Roman citizen. As an Athenian burgher he forfeited the franchise of the conquering state; and the exemption he enjoyed from the calamities of the civil war was, in another view, the penalty he paid for the loss of the name of Roman. But assuredly such were not the sentiments of the citizens of the age of Tiberius, still less those of a century later. Life at Rome, while it still retained most of the outward forms of antiquity, the harsh restrictions upon freedom of action and conversation which had been endured by the Scipios and Catos, had lost the charms of political independence, for which alone they had been content to endure them. The Roman noble now chafed at the stiff etiquette of his ancestors; he shrank from the importunate observation of his clients; he loathed the obeisances of his subjects, conscious that he deserved them neither by personal merits, nor substantial power; he rejoiced to escape from a multitude of jealous critics to companions who had no claim to watch or control him, who considered his countenance as a favour, and never paused to reflect

puendus ut . . . prodierit in publicum sine cinctu et discalceatus." Hor. *Sat.* ii. 1. 71.:

"Quin ubi se a *vulgo et scena* in secreta remorant  
Virtus Scipiadae et mitis sapientia Læli,  
Nugari cum illo et discincti ludere, donec  
Decoqueretur olus, soliti."

<sup>1</sup> Hor. *Sat.* ii. 2. 11.: "Si quem Romana fatigat  
Militia assuetum Græcari."

Hence also "græcatus," "græcanicus," applied to the manners of Romans imitated from the Greek. "Græcanicus miles," a dissolute or luxurious soldier. See Facciolati in voc.

whether it was unworthy in him to give, or in themselves to accept it. Still the actual abandonment of the prescriptive post of duty was rare and remarkable. It was affirmed, for instance, of Lucius Piso, one of the chief magnates of the Tiberian senate, that in his disgust at the proceedings of the delators, he had expressed among his compeers, a determination to withdraw from the city, and therewith from public life altogether. It had been well for him had he actually executed this threat: he had the courage to bring the favourite of the empress to justice, but not to quit the scene of his dangerous activity, and only avoided by the opportuneness of his death the penalty of charges of which he was speedily convicted.<sup>1</sup>

The retirement of Tiberius himself from the public stage was however in no respect a real relinquishment of public occupation. No one supposed that he would cease thereupon from retaining the supreme oversight of the affairs of the commonwealth; nor, in the existing state of political usage, was there any real impediment to his ruling the empire from his quiet retreat. The undefined character of the supreme authority had this advantage for its possessor, that it bound him to no stated functions, requiring his presence at certain times, at certain places. The consul must take the auspices, and these could be taken only at Rome; a dictator must perform the rites of the Latin Færiæ on the Alban hill; a tribune must not absent himself from the city during the period of his office: but none of these restrictions applied to one who retained the power of all these officers, but was exempt from their restrictions. Even though in theory the safety of the state might be regarded as entwined with the performance of certain religious ceremonies by the chief pontiff, yet from the time at least of Julius Cæsar, the presence of that august

Tiberius does  
not abandon  
public affairs.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 84.: "Inter quæ L. Piso ambitum fori, sævitiam oratorum accusationes minitantiæ, increpans abire se et cedere Urbe, victurum in aliquo abdito et longinquo rure testabatur." Comp. iv. 21. This was not the L. Piso, prefect of the city.

official had been for many years dispensed with, and there was nothing new at least in Tiberius delegating to others, or altogether omitting, duties which his imperial predecessors, and Lepidus in his retreat at Circeii, had been permitted to waive. Nevertheless this act was not without grave significance. Whenever Augustus had withdrawn from the heart of the empire, it was only to impart fresh vigour to the action of its extremities: never for a moment had he resigned his ostensible place as the prime mover of the whole machine, or let his subjects imagine that the wheels of government could continue to revolve by the mere impulse once communicated to them. The retreat to Campania was thus a great step in the development of despotism, the greatest step perhaps of all, inasmuch as it made it at once apparent that the institution of monarchy was an accomplished fact, and no longer the creature of variable popular caprice.

The retirement of Tiberius did not fail, however, to be followed by a succession of public calamities, and these were generally ascribed to so strange and inauspicious a proceeding. A private speculator had undertaken, as a matter of profit, one of the magnificent works which in better times it was the privilege of the chief magistrates or candidates for the highest offices to construct for the sake of glory or influence. In erecting a vast wooden amphitheatre in the suburban city of Fidenæ, he had omitted the necessary precaution of securing a solid foundation; and when the populace of Rome, unaccustomed, from the parsimony of Tiberius, to their favourite spectacles at home, were invited to the diversions of the opening day, which they attended in immense numbers, the mighty mass gave way under the pressure, and covered them in its ruins. Fifty thousand persons, or according to a lower computation not less than twenty thousand, men and women of all ranks, were killed or injured by this catastrophe, which called forth an edict from the senate, forbidding any one henceforth to exhibit a gladiatorial show, unless his means were independent and

Disastrous occurrences ascribed to the retirement of Tiberius.

Fail of the amphitheatre at Fidenæ.

ample, while the rash projector was driven into exile; a mild punishment, perhaps, if it was right to punish him at all. The care and attention lavished on the sufferers by, the wealthiest people at Rome, the spontaneous offering of medical care and attendance, served at least to remind the citizens of the best days of the republic, in seasons of public calamity. But this sorrow had not been forgotten when it was redoubled by the disaster of a great fire, which ravaged the whole of the Cælian hill and a considerable area of the city besides, occupied with dwellings of every class. This catastrophe, however, gave Tiberius occasion to exhibit a munificence and consideration for his people, for which he had not yet acquired credit.<sup>1</sup> The senate decreed that the hill should henceforth bear the name of Augustus, in memory of this imperial liberality, and more particularly because, in the midst of the general destruction, an image of the emperor, it was reported, had alone been left standing and unscathed. A similar prodigy had occurred in the case of another personage of the imperial house, the famous Claudia Quinta, whose effigy had twice escaped the flames, and been placed thereupon as a sacred relic in the temple of the Mother of the gods.<sup>2</sup>

Conflagration  
on the Cælian  
hill.

But to more intelligent observers these calamities were far less alarming than the steady advance of the toils which were gradually surrounding the family of Germanicus. Though the charges urged against its members were managed by private delators, none could doubt that Sejanus himself was the mover of the horrid conspiracy. The first approaches against this illustrious house were made cautiously from a distance; it was deemed advisable to sap the outworks of the family in the persons of its remoter connexions, before assailing the citadel, and attacking the mother of the princes and the princes themselves. Domitius Afer, the same who had prosecuted Claudia Pulchra to condemna-

Progress of de-  
fection.

<sup>1</sup> Vellius, ii. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 62-64. It is hardly necessary to observe that the new name of the Cælian soon fell into disuse.

tion, proceeded to advance charges of treason or licentiousness against her son, Quintilius Varus, the husband of one of the daughters of Germanicus.<sup>1</sup> In this odious prosecution he was joined by Dolabella, a kinsman of the unfortunate youth. The conduct of the first caused at least no surprise, for he was poor and delation was his trade; but Dolabella had no such excuse; and when he, highborn and wealthy as he was, stood forward to shed noble blood, the same which flowed in his own veins, the citizens were astonished and indignant. For once the senators ventured to stem the torrent of delation, which Sejanus was evidently directing to his own guilty purposes. They resolved before pronouncing sentence to await the decision of the emperor himself.<sup>2</sup> Such was the state of affairs, under the sway of the favourite and his creatures, that Tiberius was regarded as the last hope and refuge of the oppressed. Possibly, for we hear no more of the result, his interference saved the victim on this occasion. Nevertheless the power of Sejanus, whatever shock his recent rebuff may have given it, was now completely re-established. A fortunate accident had enabled him to prove his devotion to the emperor by saving his life at the risk of his own. In the course of an entertainment which Tiberius had held in the cool recess of a grotto in Campania, the roof of the cavern had suddenly given way, and covered the tables and the guests themselves. Sejanus, in the midst of the confusion, had thrown himself across the prostrate body of his master, and bending in the form of an arch, with a great exertion of his herculean strength, had shielded him from the falling fragments.<sup>3</sup> This act of courage had made a great impression on Tiberius, and seemed at least to have obliterated the unfavourable feelings which the late affair between

<sup>1</sup> This Quintilius Varus was the son by Claudia Pulchra of the Varus who perished in Germany. His marriage to a daughter of Agrippina, whose name is not known, is mentioned by M. Seneca, *Controv.* i. 1. 3. It is strange that Tacitus should have omitted to mention this connexion; but we have seen that he was not well informed as to the position of Claudia.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 66.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 59.; Suet. *Tib.* 39.

them might have excited. The minister, to whom a double share of the cares of government were now confided, could easily persuade the senators that his influence with his master was quite unbounded, and that no cloud had ever passed over the sunshine in which he basked. He set spies to watch every word and movement of Nero, the eldest child of Agrippina, and suborned the wife and brother of the luckless youth to urge him to indiscretions, and aggravate them by misrepresentation. Such, however, were the young prince's admirable sense and conduct that no handle could be found for framing an accusation against him; while the rash and thoughtless Drusus too often laid himself open to the machinations of the common enemy of their family.<sup>1</sup>

Renewed fa-  
vour of Seja-  
nua.

Having performed the dedication of the temples in Campania, which had furnished the immediate pretext for his removal from Rome, Tiberius, in the year 780, crossed the bay of Naples in quest of the spot which he had already destined for his final retreat.<sup>2</sup> In vain had he issued orders, while traversing the dense populations of the continent, that no man should presume to disturb his sullen meditations, and had even lined his route with soldiers to keep his importunate admirers at a distance. The concourse of idle and gaping multitudes whom his arrival brought everywhere together became more and more odious to him, and the sullenness with which he spurned observation gave colour to the notion that he shunned exhibiting to strangers the deformity of a diseased and bloated countenance. He hastened to bury himself in the pleasant solitudes of the little island of Caprææ. While yet in the maturity of his powers Augustus had been attracted by the charms of this sequestered retreat; he had been struck particularly with the omen of a blighted ilex reviving here during a visit he paid to the spot. Its genial climate, he conceived, might conduce to the maintenance of

Tiberius re-  
tires to the is-  
land of Caprææ.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. iv. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. iv. 67.

his own health in more advanced age, and with this view he obtained the cession of it from the Neapolitans, to whose city it belonged, in exchange for the more important nor, as reputed, less salubrious island of *Ænaria*.<sup>1</sup> Caprea at this time indeed was little better than a barren rock, the resort of wild goats, from which it derived its name, about eleven miles in circuit: but it lay within two hours' row of Misenum, the great naval station of the Lower Sea. Easily accessible from the mainland at one point, which it required little vigilance to secure, the island is singularly difficult of approach at every other. Its shores consist of limestone cliffs, sheer precipices in most parts plunging directly into the deep sea. They are furrowed here and there by those caverns celebrated for the play of coloured light in their recesses, which, after having amused and astonished the curious of our time as recent discoveries, are now ascertained to have been the forgotten haunts of Roman luxury. In the interior, an uneven but cultivable surface rises at either end of the island to the height of one thousand and two thousand feet respectively; the eastern or lower promontory having been, according to tradition, the favourite sojourn of Tiberius, and its dizzy cliff the scene of his savage executions. We have before noticed the channel, six miles wide, which separated it from the coast of Campania, whence it seems to have been divorced by a convulsion of nature, and the two famous sea-marks which faced each other on opposing summits, the pharos of Capreae and the temple of Surrentum. But while few other spots could have combined

<sup>1</sup> *Ænaria* or *Inarime* was famous for its medicinal springs: "*Ænariæque lacus medicos.*" *Stat. Syl.* iii. 5. 104. Augustus got possession of Capreae in the year 725. *Dion*, lii. 43. *Comp. Suet.* Oct. 92. Virgil, on his return from Greece in 735, devoted the remaining months of his life to the revision of the *Æneid* at Naples, and some passages even in the earlier books bear marks of interpolation at this period. Possibly the reference to Capreae (*Æn.* vii. 735.) is meant as a compliment to Augustus: "*Teleboum Capreas cum regna teneret Jam senior.*" Augustus, then just completing his forty-fifth year, was on the verge of Roman seniority.

the requisites of solitude and difficult approach with such actual proximity to the seat of government, Tiberius was not insensible to the charms of its climate, and even the attractions of its scenery; to the freshness of its evening breeze, the coolness of its summers, and the pleasing mildness of its winters.<sup>1</sup> The villas he erected on the fairest sites within these narrow limits, twelve in number and named after the greater gods of the Olympian consistory, enjoyed, we may suppose, every variety of prospect, commanded every breath of air, and caught the rays of the sun at every point of his diurnal progress.<sup>2</sup> From the heights of Capræ the eye comprehended at one glance the whole range of the Italian coast from the promontory of Circe to the temples of Pæstum, clearly visible through that transparent atmosphere. The Falernian and Gauran ridges, teeming with the *noblest* vineyards of Italy, the long ranges of the Samnite Apennines, even to the distant Lucanian mountains, formed the framework of the

<sup>1</sup> Statius (*Sylv.* iii. 5.) invites his wife to the shores of his native Parthenope:

“Quas et mollis hyems et frigida temperat æstas;  
Quas inbelle fretum torpentibus alluit undis.”

Could the lady resist so sweet an invitation to so sweet a place?

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c. In his charming description of the villa of Pollius on the Surrentine promontory, Statius specifies the various objects in view from the spot, which are nearly the same as those commanded by Capræ. The spacious residence of his friend comprised all the advantages which could be sought for in the divers localities of the Tiberian pleasure-houses: “Quæ rerum turba locine

Ingenium an domini mirer prius? hæc domus ortus  
Prospicit, et Phœbi tenerum jubar; illa cadentem  
Detinet, exactamque negat dimittere lucem . . . .  
Hæc pelagi clamore fremunt; hæc tecta sonoros  
Ignorant fluctus, terræque silentia malunt . . . .  
. . . . Quid mille revolvam

Culmina, visendique vices? sua cuique voluptas  
Atque omni proprium thalamo mare, transque jacentem  
Nerea diversis servit sua terra fenestris . . . .”

Stat. *Sylv.* ii. 2. 44.



picture, while Vesuvius reared its then level crest, yet unscarred by lava, directly in the centre. Facing the south, the spectator gazed on the expanse of the Sicilian Sea. So wide is the horizon that it is, perhaps, no fiction that at some favourable moments the outlines of the fiery isles of *Æolus*, and even of Sicily itself, are within the range of vision. The legends of *Circe* and *Ulysses*, of *Cimmerian* darkness and *Phlegrean* fires, of the wars of the *Giants* with *Jupiter*, and the graceful omens which attracted the first settlers to these shores from Greece, had perhaps a strange fascination for the worn-out soldier and politician.<sup>1</sup> Reclining on the slopes of *Capreæ*, and gazing on the glorious landscape before him, *Tiberius* might dream of a fairyland of the poet's creation, and seek some moments of repose from the hard realities of his eternal task, to perplex his attendants with insoluble questions on the subjects of the *Sirens'* songs and the name of *Hecuba's* mother.<sup>2</sup> Nor could he be unmoved, though dallying with these fanciful shadows, by the deep interest which the records of actual history had thrown over the fateful scene. There lay the battle-fields of the still youthful republic: there the rugged Roman was first broken by the culture of *Hellas*: there captive Greece first captured her conqueror. There were the plains in which the strength of *Hannibal* had wasted in ignoble luxury; and the dark crater of *Vesuvius*, from whence had issued the torrent of servile insurrection, when the empire of the world was for a moment shaken by the rage of a *Thracian* bondman. The great Italian volcano had slumbered since the dawn of history. Tokens indeed were not wanting on the surface of the fires still seething beneath the plains of *Campania*; the sulphur-

<sup>1</sup> *Stat. Sylv.* iii. 5. 79.:

"*Parthenope, cui mite solum trans æquora vectas  
Ipse Dionæa monstravit Apollo columba.*"

<sup>2</sup> *Suet. Tib.* 70.: "Maxime tamen curavit notitiam historiarum fabularum, usque ad ineptias atque derisum. Nam et grammaticos, quod genus hominum, ut diximus, maxime appetebat, ejusmodi fere questionibus experiebatur: quæ mater *Hecubæ*: quod *Achilli* nomen inter virgines fuisset: quid *Sirenes* cantare sint solitæ."

ous exhalations of Baia and Puteoli still attested the truth of legends of more violent igneous action on which the local mythology was built. But even these legends pointed to no eruption of Vesuvius: no cone of ashes rose then as now from its bosom; and cities and villages clustered at its foot or hung upon its flanks, unconscious of the elements of convulsion hushed in grim repose beside them.<sup>1</sup>

During his protracted sojourn in this pleasant locality the imperial hermit crossed but rarely to the continent, and twice only made as if he would revisit the city.<sup>2</sup>

The seclusion of his lonely rock was guarded with the strictest vigilance, and the chastisement he was said to have inflicted on the unwary fishermen who landed on the forbidden coast increased the mysterious horror with which it came soon to be regarded.<sup>3</sup> But day by day a regular service of couriers brought despatches to him from the continent; nor did he ever relax from the scrupulous attention, in which he had so long been trained, to the details of business sent him by his ministers, which must have employed his mind and tasked his patience for many hours. He was surrounded moreover in the recesses of his privacy by a number of literary men, professors of Greek and other foreign extraction, among whom he diverted himself with abstruse inquiries, such as have been already noticed, into the most unprofitable questions of mythology or grammar. Distraction of mind was the object of his literary recreations; but like the generality of his busy and restless countrymen, he had no taste for matters of really interesting inquiry, and his studies, if not pernicious, were at best merely curious. He was peculiarly addicted to conversation with the soothsayers, of whom he entertained a troop about

Occupation of  
Tiberius at Ca-  
presæ.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Prospectabatque pulcherrimum sinum, antequam Vesuvius mons ardescens faciem loci verteret." This was written about thirty years after the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. Tib. 72.: "Bis omnino toto secessus tempore Romam redire conatus," scil. ann. 786, 788. Comp. Tac. Ann. vi. 1.; Dion, lvi. 21. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. Tib. 80.

his person, making constant experiments of their skill in the examination of the lives and fortunes of his associates. Such was the account which reached the city of the life of the imperial misanthrope: it was coloured no doubt and distorted, inflamed and exaggerated: nevertheless it did not suffice to satisfy the prurient curiosity of the citizens, stimulated beyond its wont by the extraordinary circumstance of his retirement from public observation. They filled the hours they supposed to be vacant from business with amusements of a far less innocent character, with debaucheries of the deepest dye, and cruelties the most refined and sanguinary: they accused the Roman Cæsar of the crimes of a Median or Assyrian; as if their perverted imaginations delighted in contrasting the most exquisite charms of nature with the grossest depravation of humanity: and all these charges, whether or not they were in his case really true, of which we have little means of judging, found easy credence from the notorious vices of their own degraded aristocracy.<sup>1</sup>

The retirement of Tiberius to Capræ has been justly regarded as an important turning-point in his career; inas-  
 much as, having thereby screened himself from  
 the hated gaze of his subjects, he could thence-  
 forth give the rein, without shame or remorse, to  
 the worst propensities of his nature. From this time un-  
 doubtedly we find him less anxious to moderate the excessive  
 flatteries of the senate, or to mediate between its servile  
 ferocity and the wretched victims of the delators. Even on  
 the calends of January, the strictest holiday of the Roman  
 year, he could turn his solemn missive of vows and congratu-  
 lations to a demand for the blood of Titius Sabinus, of dis-  
 tinguished equestrian family, who had been betrayed by a  
 base intrigue.<sup>2</sup> *What a commencement for the new year is  
 this!* exclaimed the affrighted citizens. *What victims are  
 these with which Sejanus requires to be appeased! What*

Further dete-  
 rioration in the  
 government of  
 Tiberius.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 43-45.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 68.: "Junio Silano et Silio Nerva coss. (a. u. 781), fœdum anni principium incessit."

*day from henceforth will pass without an execution, if a season so holy and festive must be profaned with the chain and cord!* But the emperor had attained a position in which he could despise these murmurs. The complaints he urged upon the senate of the peril in which he fancied himself to stand, as the mark of so many secret conspiracies and machinations, were interpreted into dark insinuations against his own nearest kindred: every member of the imperial family, cut off by age or accident, was supposed to relieve him either from the fear of intrigues, or the mortification of being observed or thwarted. Presently the Romans imagined that the cares of empire were neglected: an outbreak of the Frisii, which seems in fact to have been speedily repressed, was exaggerated by their undue apprehensions; and it was believed that Tiberius disguised the real extent of the disaster to avoid the necessity of sending a special legate to retrieve it.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the senate, we are told, was not so much concerned for a frontier injury, as for the perils by which it seemed itself environed at home; and against these it could devise no other precaution than the most lavish adulation of the emperor. It decreed an altar to Clemency and another to Friendship, by the side of which images of Tiberius and Sejanus were to be erected, and at the same time importuned its prince with fresh entreaties for the happiness of once more beholding him. But neither Tiberius nor his favourite vouchsafed a visit to the city or its vicinity. They contented themselves with leaving the island, and exhibiting their august presence at the nearest point of the Campanian coast. Thither flocked the senators, the knights, and numbers of the inferior citizens, more apprehensive of their reception by Sejanus than even by Tiberius himself: nor did the minister's conduct belie the dread they had conceived of him, since the retirement of his master had served to exalt him to a higher pinnacle than ever. Amidst the various avocations of life in the city, the trooping of

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 72.

flatterers and courtiers to his levees might be less open to remark; but in the country, where there was no other occupation and no other diversion, every one's eyes intently watched all the rest, and the Romans were shocked at the evidence they presented to one another of the extent of their own servility. At last Sejanus, in his arrogance, as they said, forbade them even to throng his doors or crowd around him on the sea-shore; he was afraid no doubt of the jealousy of his master; and they returned in dismay and dejection to their homes, to expiate hereafter as a crime the intimacy they had so blindly pressed upon him.<sup>1</sup>

The year 781, the first of Tiberius's sojourn at Capræ, beheld the death of the unfortunate Julia, the grand-daughter of Augustus, in the barren island of Trimerus, off the coast of Apulia; a woman whose amours had once threatened to raise up candidates for the throne, but who in her disgrace had been so completely abandoned by her friends and family that she owed, it was said, the protraction of her miserable existence for years to the ostentatious compassion of Livia.<sup>2</sup> She was speedily followed to the grave by this hateful protectress. The mother of the emperor, having held in her own hands for seventy years the largest share, it may be, of actual power of any personage in the state, paid at last the debt of nature, at the moment when her son had effected his escape from her oversight, and had perhaps for the first time defied her influence. She died in the year 782, at the advanced age of eighty-six, a memorable example of successful artifice, having attained in succession, by craft if not by crime, every object she could desire in the career of female ambition.<sup>3</sup> But she had long survived every

Death of Julia the younger, the grand-daughter of Augustus.

Death of the empress Livia.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 71.: "Augustæ ope sustentata, quæ florentis privignos cum per occultum subvertisset, misericordiam erga adfectos palam ostentabat."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* v. 1.; Dion, lvi. 2. Pliny makes her eighty-two: but as Tiberius was now in his seventieth year, the earlier date assigned for her birth is undoubtedly the true one. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xiv. 8

genuine attachment she may at any time have inspired, nor has a single voice been raised by posterity to supply the want of honest eulogists in her own day. Her obsequies gave occasion for the first public appearance of Caius, the youngest of the sons of Germanicus, at this time in his seventeenth year, to pronounce her funeral oration; for Tiberius excused himself from attending, while he persisted in making no change in the usual disposition of his day, and forbade the senate, pretending that such was her own desire, to decree divine honours to the deceased.<sup>1</sup> At the same time he took occasion to show his sense of the liberty he had recovered by his mother's death, by some pointed remarks on the servile flattery of the *woman's friends*, her associates. These remarks were directed, it was believed, more particularly against the consul Fufius, who had ventured, under the powerful protection of the empress, to indulge in unseemly sneers against the emperor himself.<sup>2</sup> While such was the demeanour of Tiberius, it was evident that he felt no personal regret for the loss he had sustained, and the funeral passed over with little ceremony or magnificence. Even the will of Livia remained for a long time unexecuted.<sup>3</sup>

The obsequies of the consort of Octavius were celebrated under the name she had long borne in public of Julia Augusta. By admission into the Cæsarean family she had become invested with the undefinable Her character. charm of far-descended glory common to the children of Venus and Iulus, which might seem to extend to her a rightful claim to apotheosis hereafter, together with her husband and his divine parent. But her union with Octavius had in the meantime entitled her to a share in the high and expressive designation of August, which was scarcely distinguished

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* v. 1. 2.; Dion, lvi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Dicax idem, et Tiberium acerbis facetis irridere solitas."

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 51. In this and the preceding chapter instances are given of the impatience with which Tiberius latterly bore the domination of his mother; his harsh language towards her and about her, and the indifference he manifested at her decease.

in the popular apprehension from that of mistress or sovereign. She glided gracefully from the wheel and the women's chamber to the chair of council and even to the throne of state: the first of Roman matrons she had been suffered, if not to assume a public capacity, at least to be addressed as a public character.<sup>1</sup> Though little scrupulous, we may believe, in the pursuit of her personal objects, she was not without a right royal sense of the true dignity of her unexampled position. To the sterner counsels of her husband she brought the feminine elements of softness and placability. The policy of Augustus in his later years was impressed with the mildness and serene confidence of his consort; and even under the gloomier tyranny of his successor her chamber was the asylum of many trembling victims of persecution, her extended arm bade defiance to the arts of an Afer and the power of a Sejanus.<sup>2</sup> Nor was her private benevolence less conspicuously exerted in behalf of noble indigence. She caused many poor but well-born children to be educated at her own expense, and gave portions to many marriageable maidens.<sup>3</sup> Her fidelity to her husband may have been the result of prudence, her devotion to her son a calculation of ambition; but it is impossible not to read in the monuments of her innumerable household, the timers of her person, the attendants at her repasts, the ministers of her charities, whom she survived to bury in one family mausoleum, tokens of kindness and

<sup>1</sup> Thus we find her addressed in the *Consolatio de morte Drusi* as Princeps. The senate upon her death decreed her an arch, and the title of Mater Patriæ, which Tiberius refused to ratify: nevertheless medals exist on which such a legend appears, and it is a question whether these were not struck in her honour even during the lifetime of Augustus. See Eckhel, vi. 154, 155. Livia ultimately obtained deification under the principate of her grandson Claudius.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, l. c.: καὶ ἀψίδα αὐτῇ, ὃ μηδεμίᾳ ἄλλῃ γυναικὶ ἐψηφίσαντο, ὅτι τε οὐκ ὀλίγους σφῶν ἐσεσώκει, καὶ ὅτι παῖδας πολλῶν ἐτετροφέει. Vell. ii. 130.: "Per omnia diis quam hominibus similior femina, cuius potentiam nemo sensit nisi aut levatione periculi aut accessione dignitatis."

<sup>3</sup> The Roman Juno was as merciful as she was modest, if we may believe a fantastic story of Dion's: γυμνός ποτε ἄνδρας ἀπαντήσαντας αὐτῇ καὶ μέλλοντας διὰ τοῦτο θανατωθῆσθαι ἔωσεν εἰπούσα ὅτι οὐδὲν ἀνδριάντων ταῖς σφῆραις οἱ τοιοῦτοι διαφέρουσι. Dion, l. c. .

generosity, however mingled with pride, which appeal forcibly to our admiration.<sup>1</sup> But a later generation could never forgive her for being the mother of Tiberius; and every step by which the tyrant, the patron of the informers, the decimator of the senate, advanced to the sovereignty of the Roman people was ascribed to the ambition, the arts, and the crimes of the unfortunate Livia. The proscriptions were forgotten in fifty years, the delations never.

<sup>1</sup> The single columbarium of Livia which has been discovered, and probably there were more, contains the ashes of above a thousand of her slaves and freedmen: the diversity of their employments, all of which are carefully recorded, is, as may be supposed, almost infinite. See Wallon, *Esclavage*, ii. 145, foll. after Gori.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

THE FATE OF THE FAMILY OF GERMANICUS.—BANISHMENT OF AGRIPPINA AND HER SON NERO.—DISGRACE AND IMPRISONMENT OF HER SON DRUSUS.—PERSECUTION OF HER FRIENDS.—FATE OF ASINIUS GALLUS.—CULMINATION OF THE FORTUNES OF SEJANUS.—HIS ALLIANCE WITH THE IMPERIAL FAMILY AND CONSULSHIP (A. U. 784.).—ALARMED AT THE JEALOUSY OF TIBERIUS, HE CONSPIRES AGAINST HIM.—TIBERIUS DETERMINES, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF MACRO, TO OVERTHROW HIM.—HIS ARREST IN THE SENATE-HOUSE, AND EXECUTION.—PROSCRIPTION OF HIS ADHERENTS.—VENGEANCE FOR THE MURDER OF DRUSUS.—SAVAGE CRUELTY OF TIBERIUS.—HORRIBLE DEATH OF THE YOUNGER DRUSUS.—AGRIPPINA STARVES HERSELF.—INFATUATION OF TIBERIUS.—HIS MORTIFICATION AT THE DESPONDENCY OF THE NOBLES.—VOLUNTARY DEATHS OF NERVA AND ARRUPTIUS.—PROSPECTS OF THE SUCCESSION.—CAIUS CALIGULA AND THE YOUNG TIBERIUS.—ASCENDENCY OF MACRO.—LAST DAYS AND DEATH OF TIBERIUS (A. U. 790.).—EFFECTS OF THE REIGN OF TERROR: ALARM OF THE NOBLES; THOUGHTLESS DISSIPATION OF THE POPULACE.—THE PROVINCES GENERALLY WELL CARED FOR AND PROSPEROUS.—EXAMPLE FROM THE STATE OF JUDEA. (A. D. 29–787., A. U. 782–790.)

THE first incident which marked the withdrawal of Livia's protecting wing from the afflicted, was the appearance of a harsh despatch from Tiberius to the senate, directed against Agrippina and her son Nero. This letter, it was believed, had been written some time earlier, but withheld through the influence of the empress, who, while she was gratified by the depression of the family of Germanicus, had nevertheless exerted herself, not without success, to shield it from ruin. The emperor now complained in bitter terms of the alleged misconduct of his grand-nephew; not, indeed, of any political intrigues to his own prejudice, but of personal vices and dissoluteness:

Tiberius complains to the senate of Agrippina and Nero.

against the chaste matron, his mother, he had not ventured to utter even such imputations as these, but had confined himself to reproving once more the vehemence so often remarked in her language and demeanour. The senators were in great perplexity: ready as they were to carry out the commands of their master, however atrocious, they dared not act on murmurs which conveyed no express order, and made no demand on their active interference. While they deliberated, however, warned by one of their own body to take no hasty step in so delicate a matter, the people assembled before the doors, and bearing aloft the effigies of their favourites, shouted aloud that the letter was an abominable forgery, and the lives of the emperor's nearest kindred were menaced without his knowledge, and in defiance of his inclinations. These cries evidently pointed at Sejanus as the contriver of a foul conspiracy; but the favourite, perceiving his danger, played dexterously on his master's fears, representing the movement as an act of rebellion, the images of Nero and Agrippina as the standards of a civil war, till he wrung from him a second proclamation, in which the impetuosity of the citizens was sternly rebuked, the tardiness of the senate reproved more mildly, and the charges against the culprits repeated, with a distinct injunction to proceed at once to consider them with due formality.<sup>1</sup>

Thus encouraged and stimulated to take their part, the senators declared that they had only been withheld from a more zealous defence of the imperial majesty by the want of definite instructions. Sejanus triumphed; accusers sprang up at his beck; the process was carried through, we may believe, with all the disregard of decency and justice for which the tribunal of the fathers had long been infamous; and though we have lost the details of it, we know that its result was fatal to its unfortunate victims, and that both the mother and son were

They are banished to islands.

Tac. *Ann.* v. 5., A. U. 782. From this point there is a lacuna of two years in the annals of Tacitus.

banished to barren islands, the one to Pandateria, the other to Pontia. True to the indomitable ferocity of her character, the she-wolf Agrippina resisted the atrocious mandate with violence, and in her struggle with the centurion in whose charge she was placed, such was the horrid story which obtained credence with the citizens, one of her eyes was actually struck from her head.<sup>1</sup> Sejanus now urged his success with redoubled energy. He had removed his two most conspicuous rivals to an exile from which the members of the imperial family were never known to return. Drusus still

Sejanus obtains the disgrace of the younger Drusus.

remained, of an age and character to compete with him in the career of his ambition. Tiberius retained this prince, together with his younger brother Caius, about his own person at Caprææ : there was the more reason to fear the favour he might acquire with his aged relative ; nor were there the same opportunities for misrepresenting his conduct, or urging him by insidious advisers into political intrigues. But Sejanus, in seducing the affections of his consort Lepida, found the means of undermining his credit with the emperor. The faithless spouse was engaged, by the promise perhaps of marriage with Sejanus, as the wife of another Drusus before her, to excite the jealousy of Tiberius against her husband ; and thus even the recesses of the imperial retreat, in which the old man had sought to bury himself from the crimes and follies of the world he hated, were opened to the machinations of his most intimate friends and relatives. Drusus was dismissed from Caprææ, and ordered to repair in disgrace to Rome. But Sejanus was not satisfied with this indication of the sovereign's anger : fearing lest his master might change his mind, he induced the consul Cassius Longinus to make a motion in the senate on the prince's presumed misconduct ; and the fathers hastened to respond to it by declaring him a public enemy. Drusus was immediately placed under arrest ; but the privileges of noble rank still exempted him from con-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 53.

finement in the Mamertine dungeons, and he was thrust, in mockery of the free custody which was his legal right, into a subterranean chamber of the palace.<sup>1</sup>

Livia, as we have seen, had been surrounded in her later years by a little court of her own favourites, and among

Tiberius persecutes the friends of Livia.

them were many grumblers and captious enemies of the emperor, who obtained leave, by flattering the vanity of their mistress, to vent even in her

ears their ill-feeling towards the chief of the state. In vain had Tiberius chafed under the jeers of this licensed coterie; the influence of his mother had protected it, and he had been compelled to brood in secret over mortifications which he had not the spirit to resent. But he had not forgotten a murmur or a smile; and as soon as the patroness of the group was removed, he made his long-checked vengeance felt by its members in succession. The friends of Agrippina and her children he regarded in a still more serious light. They constituted, in his view, not a private clique of dissatisfied scoffers, but a political faction; they were not discontented with his conduct or government, but, as he thought, and others doubtless thought the same, prepared as foes and rivals to substitute another government, the government at least of another, in its room. In the councils of this faction lay, as he conceived, the germs of a revolution of the palace and even of civil war. Among its chiefs were men of the

Cruel fate of Asinius Gallus, a friend of Agrippina.

highest birth and character. None was more distinguished than Asinius Gallus, now an old man, and a veteran dissembler, whose pretensions have

already been noticed. This man had presumed to take to wife the unfortunate Vipsania, the same from whom Tiberius had been compelled to separate himself; and besides the personal feelings which this marriage had caused him, Tiberius beheld in it a covert aspiration to a share in the imperial inheritance. At the commencement of his principate he had been openly treated by Asinius as an equal in an assembly

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 54.; Dion, *lvi.* 3., A. U. 783. At this point there is a short break in the remains of Dion's history.

of equals. In consequence he had never ceased to regard him with jealousy; and when latterly he observed him paying marked court to Sejanus, he resented it perhaps as an attempt to disguise increasing hostility to himself.<sup>1</sup> When Asinius came at last to Capræ, as the bearer of a vote of fresh honours to the favourite, Tiberius received him indeed with the utmost apparent cordiality, but at the same time clandestinely dispatched an accusation against him to the senate, and the senate proceeded to pass sentence upon him without a hearing, at the very moment that he was being entertained at the emperor's table. The consuls sent a prætor to Capræ to arrest him before the eyes of his host, who affected surprise and sympathy, and desired that he might be kept in honourable custody till he should come in person to take cognisance of so lamentable a case.<sup>2</sup> This period, however, never arrived; and it was not till after three years of close and cruel imprisonment that Tiberius consented at last to give the word, not for his release, but for his execution, accompanied, it was said, with the savage remark, *Now at last I have taken him back to favour.*<sup>3</sup>

The base dissimulation of Tiberius, which he now seemed, from long habit, to practise almost unconsciously, and where for his own purposes it was least required, may serve to aggravate our disgust at his callous insensibility. We need not suppose, however, that it was from any wanton cruelty that so long a punishment was inflicted on the sufferer. Among the infirmities which grew on Tiberius with advancing age were irresolution and procrastination, and neither in giving audience to an em-

Procrastination  
and irresolu-  
tion of Tibe-  
rius.

<sup>1</sup> Of Asinius, Augustus, as we have seen, had said that he was ambitious but incapable. The conceit and captiousness of his feeble character appears in the presumption with which, like his father Pollio, he criticized the language and genius of Cicero. Quintil. xii. 1. 22.; Gell. *Noct. Att.* xvii. 1.; Suet. *Claud.* 41.; Plin. *Epist.* vii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lvi. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Dion, lviii. 23.: who repeats, however, the same expression on another occasion. Comp. also Suet. *Tib.* 61.: "Et in recognoscendis custodiis precant euidam pœnæ maturitatem respondit: nondum tecum in gratiam redii."

bassy, nor in deciding the fate of a criminal, could he determine to act with the promptness which befitted his position.<sup>1</sup> His jealousy once aroused with regard to Sejanus, he could not nerve himself to any definite course of action. The clamours even of the insensate populace had not been lost upon him; though every demand for the punishment of his relatives had come to him direct from the senators, he could not but perceive that the favourite might have moved them to it. From the objects of suspicion thus indicated to him, every suspicion rebounded on the head of the favourite himself. While he sought to disguise his doubts and anxieties, yielding in every point, more readily than ever, to the counsels of his insidious adviser, and consenting at his instance to the disgrace of his kinsmen or courtiers, he shrank day by day from issuing the order which should deprive him irrecoverably of their services. Thus while he kept Asinius and Drusus in confinement to gratify Sejanus, he could not yet resolve to deliver them to the executioner. Meanwhile he continued to heap fresh honours on his minister with a restless profusion, which itself implied distrust. Though the hopes Sejanus had conceived of entrance into the Julian house through an union with Livilla had been discouraged and deferred, it appears that the emperor relaxed after a time in his opposition to them, and that they were crowned, as has been said, at least with the ceremony of a betrothal. The marriage indeed may never have taken effect, though so completely was the connexion of Sejanus with his master secured by the mere act of affiancing, that he receives from Tacitus the title of his son-in-law.<sup>2</sup> But the loss of the greater part of the fifth book of Tacitus's *Annals* deprives us of our surest guide to the machinations of the emperor and his minister. It would

Sejanus becomes affianced to Livilla.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* v. 6., vi. 8. See above. Zonaras (xi. 2.) says expressly that he was married to Julia, daughter of Drusus; but Julia, the only daughter of Drusus we know of, was married to Nero. Tac. *Ann.* iii. 29., iv. 60., vi. 27. See Ritter on *Ann.* vi. 8., Suet. *Tib.* 65.: "Spe affinitatis deceptum."

seem probable, however, that Tiberius, soon after the confinement of Drusus, became alarmed at the formidable attitude his favourite had assumed; and we may believe that, in conferring upon him the last marks of confidence he was

He is advanced  
to the consul-  
ship, A. U. 784.

really meditating his overthrow. Nevertheless when, on the first day of 784, Sejanus entered with Tiberius on the consulship, the worshippers of his uprisen star were disturbed by no presentiment of its impending decline. The origin of Sejanus was not such as to entitle him to an honour from which Mæcenas had modestly shrunk; but his flatterers, ascending higher in the annals of the republic, compared his rise with that of a Coruncanius, a Carvilius, a Marius, or a Pollio. It was no novel principle, they declared, for the senate or people to choose the best men for distinction regardless of their birth; and it was now left for Tiberius to show that the wisdom of the emperor was not inferior to that of the citizen.<sup>1</sup> While, however, all orders vied with one another in the respect they paid to Sejanus, while the petitioners who had flocked to the minister in Campania had been more numerous than those who courted the prince himself, while games and holidays were voted in his honour, and before his images or pictures altars were raised, vows conceived, and sacrifices offered, an excess of flattery which the emperor had personally spurned, Tiberius trembled more and more for his own safety, and was anx-

Tiberius and  
Sejanus con-  
suls.

ious at least to remove their idol from his presence. Accordingly, when he associated Sejanus with himself in the consulship, he deputed him to perform alone the actual functions of both in the city; and now Sejanus, it was remarked, was emperor of Rome, while Tiberius was merely lord of an island.<sup>2</sup> The senators received the leader of their debates with acclamations, and Sejanus, though not unconscious of the workings of jealousy in his master's mind, persuaded himself that he had reached an

<sup>1</sup> Vell. ii. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lviil. 5.: *ὥστε συνελόντι εἰπεῖν, αὐτὸν μὲν αὐτοκράτορα, τὸν δὲ Τιβερίον νησίαρχόν τινα εἶναι δοκεῖν.*

eminence from which he could control or even defy them. The attachment of the citizens towards him was now, he conceived, amply demonstrated: the alacrity with which they hailed him as the emperor's colleague betokened their full consent to his seizing the undivided empire. The decree of the senate, which now conferred on him jointly with Tiberius the consulate for five years, sounded in his ears like the entire surrender of the government to his hands, as it had formerly been surrendered to Augustus; and if any material resources were yet required to secure his usurpation, he could wield, as he conceived, in his faithful prætorians the final arbitrament of the sword.

Since his accession, however, to the principate, it had been the custom of Tiberius to retain his consulships only for a short period. In 771 he had abdicated office after a few days; in 774 after three months.<sup>1</sup> Now also, far from accepting the proffered five years, he resigned the consulship in the fifth month; and Sejanus, it seems, was required at the same time to give way to a consul suffect.<sup>2</sup> Faustus Cornelius Sulla was supplied in the place of the one, Sextidius Catullinus received the fasces from the other. Sejanus possibly now felt for the first time that he was treading a downward path. The flattering decree by which his consulship was held up to the imitation of all future magistrates, the offer of the proconsular power which was at the same time made to him, and his elevation by the emperor to the dignity of the priesthood, would all fail to reassure him; for at the same time Caius Cæsar was advanced to the priesthood also, and the favour with which the young prince was mentioned in an imperial rescript had been accepted by the citizens as a token that he was actually destined for the succession. Uneasy and irresolute in the midst of his success, Sejanus bethought himself of the re-

Tiberius and  
Sejanus resign  
the consulship.

<sup>1</sup> The consulship of 784 was Tiberius's fifth. See Tac. *Ann.* iii. 31. Suetonius, in calling it his third, is speaking only of his principate.

<sup>2</sup> Hoeck, *Rom. Gesch.* i. 8. p. 153. from Noris. *Epist. Cons. in Grav. The.* xl. 404.



source which had hitherto never failed him, of a personal interview with his patron. He asked permission to visit his affianced bride, who was retained beneath the roof of her father-in-law at Capræ, under the pretext of a sickness from which she was suffering. But to this demand Tiberius returned a refusal, though softened by the excuse that he was himself prepar-

Tiberius refuses to see Sejanus,

ing speedily to remove with his family to Rome.<sup>1</sup> This repulse was followed by a decree forbidding divine honours to be paid to any mere mortal, and fatal significance was attached to a letter, throughout which the bare name of Sejanus was mentioned, without the addition of any of his titles. At the same time some of his personal enemies, it was observed, received unusual favours; all which things were not overlooked by an anxious and vigilant herd of courtiers, as ominous of impending disgrace. Already the crowd of senators and freedmen began to waver in their devotion to the upstart. But, on the other hand, his spirits were sometimes raised by the hints the emperor took care to drop of his own failing health; by the death of Nero in his confinement, starved, as was reported, by his unnatural uncle's commands;<sup>2</sup> and by the appointment of his creature Fulcinus Trio to the consulship for the latter part of the year. He was most concerned, however, by the manifest failure of the hopes he had entertained of the good will of the people, whose predilection for Caius, the youngest of the beloved family of Germanicus, had recently been warmly expressed. Regretting that he had wanted courage to strike openly while armed with the authority of the fasces, he began now to concert with his nearest intimates the means of assassination. The arrival of Ti-

who conceals measures against his life.

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be the meaning of Dion, lviil. 7.: *ὁ δ' οὖν Τιβερίος ταῖς υἱὲν ἐρωσύναις ἐτίμησεν αὐτὸν, οὐ μὴν καὶ μετεπέμψατο, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἰρησαμένῳ οἱ δπως ἐς τὴν Καππαρίαν, ἐπὶ προφάσει τῆς μελλονούμενου νοσησάσης, ἐλθῆν, κατὰ χώραν μέιναι προσέταξεν.*

<sup>2</sup> The death of Nero, which falls within the period for which we have lost the narration of Tacitus, is learnt from Suetonius, *Tib.* 5.

berius at Rome would furnish ample opportunity to a friend, a kinsman, and a minister. Several of the senators had engaged in the enterprise, the guards had been tampered with and, it was hoped, secured; but the plot was soon extended beyond the limits of safety. One of the conspirators, named Satrius Secundus, already infamous as a delator, revealed it to Antonia, the aged mother of Germanicus, a woman of noble character, who preferred, of the two persecutors of her race, to save Tiberius and destroy Sejanus.<sup>1</sup>

The conspiracy is divulged.

The emperor, possessed of all the proofs he required, hesitated, as usual, to act. He shrank from openly denouncing the traitor, and demanding his head of the senate; and against a covert surprise Sejanus had sufficiently guarded himself. The stroke of Tiberius was prepared with infinite cunning, and executed with consummate dexterity and boldness. He entrusted it to Sertorius Macro, an officer of the body guard, on whom, in the absence of Sejanus, he had, perhaps, relied for his personal security at Capræ. To this man he gave a commission to take the command of the prætorians at Rome, and even empowered him, in the last necessity, to lead forth Drusus from his dungeon, and place him at the head of affairs.<sup>2</sup> It might not be safe, however, to assume authority over a jealous soldiery, devoted, apparently, to their familiar chief, and estranged from an emperor whose person they had almost forgotten. But Macro, resolute and crafty, was not daunted. He aspired to fill himself the place of Sejanus, and so lofty an ambition was to be deterred by no ordinary peril. Reaching Rome at midnight, the 17th of October, he sought an interview with Memmius Regulus, now the colleague of Trio in the consulship, and known for his stead-

Measures of Tiberius to circumvent Sejanus.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 7. 6. This conspiracy is unknown to Dion apparently, but alluded to by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Josephus. The loss of this portion of the *Annals* has deprived us of distinct proof of it, but it was mentioned no doubt in the *Memoirs* of Agrippina.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 23.; Suet. *Tib.* 65.

fast loyalty. Opening to him the purport of his mission, he required him to convene the senate early in the temple of Apollo, which adjoined the imperial residence on the Palatine. The spot was somewhat removed from the common thoroughfares of the city, and the approach to it by three narrow gates might be easily guarded against a sudden attack. Another recommendation might be its proximity to the place where Drusus was confined, should it become necessary to produce him. Macro next repaired to Græcinus Laco, the captain of the Urban police, and with him concerted measures for occupying the avenues to the temple with his armed force, while he should himself amuse the dreaded prætorians, and keep them close in their distant quarters. Thus prepared, he threw himself in the way of Sejanus, as the minister, wondering at the hasty summons, and foreboding no good to himself from it, was proceeding to the meeting escorted by an armed retinue. To him Macro blandly intimated that the occasion for which the fathers were convened was in fact no other than the gracious appointment, now about to be announced, of Sejanus himself to the tribunitian power, an appointment equivalent, as generally understood, to formal association in the empire. Intoxicated with the prospect of the consummation, at the moment when he had rashly resolved to hazard every thing on a daring treason, Sejanus was thrown completely off his guard. Shaking off at the temple door the attendance of his clients and soldiers, he entered with a light step and smiling countenance; while Macro, hastily communicating to the prætorians without that he was appointed their prefect, and promising them an ample largess on his installation, induced them to return with him to their camp, and attend while he announced the circumstance to their comrades. He only waited to present the emperor's letter to the consuls, and then withdrew quietly in the tumult of applause which greeted it, leaving Laco to watch the proceedings. He required a little time to compose the temper of the guards, of whose ready acceptance of his appointment he could not

feel secure. With this object the letter of Tiberius had been made more than usually diffuse. The consuls handed it in due form to the quæstor, and as soon as the buzz of expectation, and the compliments, already passing between Sejanus and his flatterers, who comprehended the great body of the senate, were hushed, it was deliberately recited.

Sejanus composed himself to endure the long preamble of the imperial missive, such as had before often taxed his patience, but never so much as on this fatal occasion.<sup>1</sup> It commenced with a passing reference to His dispatch to the senate. various affairs of state; then diverged to a gentle reproof of Sejanus himself for some trifling neglect; thence wandered again to more general subjects, mixed with strange, and as it seemed fantastic, complaints of the solitude of the poor old man, and his precarious position. It required one of the consuls to come with a military force to Caprea, and escort the princeps into the city, that in the midst of his faithful citizens he might securely unbosom his griefs. From these desultory complaints, however, the letter descended gradually to particulars, and proceeded to demand the punishment of certain personages well known as adherents of Sejanus. For some time the senators had been growing uneasy, not knowing what upshot to anticipate to a missive, the tone of which waxed less and less in harmony with the addresses to which they had been accustomed. One by one they slunk away from the minister's side, and left him wondering and irresolute, still clinging to the hope that all would end as he wished; and shrinking to the last from the appeal to force, which must irrevocably compromise him. The agitation of the assembly became more marked. Sejanus looked anxiously around. Suddenly, before the whole letter was yet unrolled, he found himself closely thronged by the chiefs of the senate, and precluded from shifting his position, while the sentence with which the long missive terminated denounced him by name as a traitor, and

<sup>1</sup> Juvenal, x. 71.: "Verbosa et grandis epistola venit A. Capreis."

required the consuls to place him under arrest. Regulus called on him to surrender. Unaccustomed to hear the voice of authority, or bewildered with the sense of danger, he paused, and on a second summons demanded in confusion whether he was actually called? Once more the summons was repeated, and as he rose, Laco confronted him sword in hand, the senators sprang in a body to their feet, and heaped insults and reproaches upon him; while Regulus, fearing the risks of delay, staid not to put the question to the vote, but on the first voice given for his arrest, bade the

Sejanus is arrested,  
 lictors seize his hands, and hurried him off under an escort of guards and magistrates. Rapidly as he was transported from the Palatine to the Mamertine dungeon, for no measures of law or etiquette were kept at a crisis of such peril, the populace was already apprised of his disgrace, and as he was led across the forum he might behold with his own eyes the consummation of his fall, in the overthrow of his statues with ropes and hatchets. The effigies of public men, conspicuous in the Sacred Way, or enshrined in halls and theatres, served often to divert from more important objects the fury of an enraged populace. To crush the marble image of an enemy to powder, to break the gold or brass for the melting pot, and condemn to ignoble uses the hated limbs and lineaments, was the first impulse of scorn and passion, and might sometimes save his palace from destruction and his family from outrage.<sup>1</sup> Macro in the meantime had not been less successful in the camp. By boldly advancing his offers to an immense amount, he had appeased the first outbreak of sedition among the soldiers, and when the senators ascertained that they were secure on that side, they met again the same day in the temple of Concord, as the spot nearest to the prison. Here, encouraged by the acclamations of the people and the indifference of the prætorians, they proceeded to anticipate the well-perceived wish of the sover-

See the well-known lines of Juvenil, x. 61. foll. :

"Ex facie toto orbe secunda

Fiunt urceoli, pelves, sartago, patellæ."

eign, by decreeing death to the traitor. Sejanus was immediately strangled in the depths of <sup>and put to death.</sup> his prison, and his body dragged to the foot of the Gemonian stairs for exposure. His death was followed without delay by the arrest of his family, his kinsmen and friends, the accomplices of his cherished schemes, or the instruments of his fraud and cruelty; while every one who hated the favourite or professed to love the emperor hurried to the spot where his remains were lying, and trampled with contumely on the ruins of power.<sup>1</sup>

The first days which followed this catastrophe at Rome were filled with scenes of confusion and slaughter. The populace rushing from one extreme to the other, now denounced the fallen minister as the per- <sup>Confusion at Rome among all orders of citizens.</sup> verter of the emperor's well-known generosity, and wreaked on his friends and creatures their vengeance for every wrong inflicted by Tiberius on the children and adherents of Germanicus. The prætorians were offended at the superior reliance the emperor had placed on the police, and vented their unreasoning indignation in acts of riot and plunder. The senators, one and all, apprehensive of the jealousy both of the emperor and the populace, rushed headlong to condemn every act of flattery they had so lately committed. They decreed that none should wear mourning for the traitor, that a statue of Liberty should be erected in the forum, that a day of rejoicing should be held, and finally that the anniversary of the happy event should be sanctified by extraordinary shows and solemnities. Excessive honours, they proclaimed, should never again be paid to a subject: and no vow should be conceived in the name of any mortal man, save of the emperor only.<sup>2</sup> Yet, so inconsistent is servility, they heaped in the same breath distinctions almost

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lvi. 9-11.; Seneca *de Tranqu. Anim.* ii. 9.: "Quo die illum senatus deduxerat populus in frusta divisit." Juvenal, l. c.

<sup>2</sup> The few existing coins of Sejanus have been purposely defaced, Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vii. 195. We have busts ascribed to Brutus, Cicero, and Antonius, but none, I believe, of the disgraced minion of Tiberius.

equal to those of Sejanus upon both Macro and Laco, which only the good sense of those fortunate officers induced them to decline. They urged Tiberius to accept the title of Father of his Country, an assumption he had ever modestly declined, and now again rejected with becoming resolution, as well as the proposal that the senate should swear to all his acts. His rugged nature was softened by the sense of his deliverance. The iron tears glistened on his cheek. *Steadfast as I feel myself*, he said, *in good and patriotic principles, yet all things human are liable to change; and never, so may the gods help me, will I bind the fathers to respect all the future acts of one who, even by falling from his right senses, may at any time fall from virtue.*<sup>1</sup>

Tiberius, however, on his solitary rock had suffered hours of intense and restless anxiety. The desperate resolution to which he had braced himself for the destruction of Sejanus had given a shock to his whole system, and during the interval of suspense he seemed altogether unnerved. He had disposed a system of telegraphic communications to reach from Rome to Capræ; and while, planted on the highest pinnacle of his island, he watched for the concerted signal of success or failure, a squadron of the swiftest triremes lay ready below to waft him, if required, without delay to the legions of Gaul or Syria.<sup>2</sup> When at last the news of the arrest and execution reached him, though relieved from an intolerable anxiety, he was yet so far from recovering his equanimity that he refused admittance to the deputation of senators, knights, and citizens sent in haste to congratulate him; nor would he even grant an interview to Regulus, his well-tried adherent, when he came, as the letter had directed him, to escort the emperor to Rome with a military equipage.

That the fall of a discarded favourite should be followed by the disgrace of his family, and perhaps of his intimate

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 67.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lvi. 13.; Suet. *Tib.* 65.: "Speculabundus ex altissima rupe."

associates, would not be extraordinary under any monarchical regime; but the wide and sanguinary proscription which now descended on the nobility of Rome may confirm our surmise of the actual guilt of Sejanus, and of the discovery of a real plot against the ruler. Had indeed the long gathering discontent of the citizens come at last to a head? were the murmurs which, whether waking or sleeping, ever pressed on the ears of Tiberius, actually about to explode in revolt or assassination? was the long day-dream of his life, that he *held a wolf by the ears*, on the point of being realized in a fatal catastrophe? Such at least was the conviction under which his courage and even his reason staggered. Tormented as he was by these miserable alarms, we can be little surprised at the bloodshed in which he sought to drown his apprehensions. Yet in the midst of his frenzy, he was not unmindful of his accustomed policy. The culprits whom he demanded for punishment were, at least at first, a few only of the most conspicuous; and these, with perhaps one or two exceptions, he was content to reserve for a future sentence. The choice as well as the condemnation of the majority of these victims fell to the senate itself, which partly from hatred of the fallen minister, partly to ingratiate itself with its terrified master, lent a ready ear to the delators, or impelled the course of justice with encouragements and rewards. Among the first to follow the fortunes of Sejanus was his uncle Blæsus, the object but recently of such special honours. Yet the sons of Blæsus were spared; and even a brother of the great criminal was suffered to escape, though, if we may believe a strange anecdote which has been reported to us, he had ventured to hold up the emperor to unseemly ridicule.<sup>1</sup>

Proscription of  
the friends of  
Sejanus.

<sup>1</sup> The voluntary deaths of two Blæsi, evidently near relations and probably sons of Blæsus the uncle, are mentioned on a latter occasion. Tac. Ann. vi. 40. Lucius Sejanus, as prætor, had taken the fancy of ridiculing Tiberius, who was bald, by collecting a set of bald performers for the Floralia. The 5000 Hink boys, who were appointed to light the populace on their return from the theatre, were all closely shaven. Tiberius pretended not to notice the insult. Bald



One of his nearest associates, named Terentius, was suffered to plead that, in giving his confidence to the favourite in the height of his influence, he had done no more than follow the example of Tiberius himself. A horrid story indeed is related of the execution of the young children of Sejanus, who were hurried off to death, with circumstances perhaps of more than ordinary atrocity, in the first frenzy of the proscription.<sup>1</sup> It has been imagined that the historian Velleius Paterculus, whose brief but spirited sketch of Roman affairs terminates with the sixteenth year of Tiberius, and who is notorious for his flattery of Sejanus, was involved in the general wreck of the fallen minister's adherents: but there seems no reason to suppose this, the work itself having evidently reached its destined termination.<sup>2</sup> On the whole, it would appear that Tiberius, hardly less afraid to follow up his blow than in the first instance to strike it, was satisfied with watching from his retreat, which for several months he did not venture to quit, the proceedings of the senate against all who could be deemed his enemies. Nor was it only fear for himself that alternately exasperated and unnerved him. A terrible disaster recurred to his memory. The death of his son had been unexpected and premature. Sejanus had solicited the widow in marriage. Suspicion worked fiercely in

men, adds the historian, were from that time called Sejani, one does not well see why. Dion, lviii. 19.

<sup>1</sup> The story can only be told in the words of Tacitus himself: "Portantur in carcerem filius imminentium intelligens, puella adeo nescia, ut crebro interrogaret, quod ob delictum, et quo traheretur? neque facturam ultra: et posse se puerili verbere moneri. Tradunt temporis ejus auctores quia triumphali supplicio adfici virginem inauditum habebatur, a carnifice laqueum juxta compressam: exin obliis faucibus, id ætatis corpora in Gemonias abjecta." *Ann.* v. 9. By the salvo, "tradunt," &c., I conceive the writer to intimate that the story was not detailed in all its horrors by accredited histories, but was one of the flying anecdotes of the day (comp. *Ann.* i. 1.: "Recentibus odiis compositæ"), which he found too piquant to omit from his tableau. Compare the reference to it in Suetonius, who carelessly generalizes the particular story into an ordinary occurrence. *Tib.* 61. Dion (lviii. 11.) merely copies from the above.

<sup>2</sup> Vell. ii. 131.: "Voto finiendum volumen sit."

the tyrant's brain. Had Drusus perished by poison, and was Sejanus the murderer? The surmise was speedily verified. Apicata, the divorced wife of Sejanus, had been spared in the search after the accomplices of his recent crimes. Her hatred to the husband who had so deeply injured her was a sufficient guarantee perhaps for her innocence of all concert with him now. But when she saw her children involved in the fate of their father she was distracted with conflicting feelings. As the last revenge she could take on the cause of all her misery, she revealed every circumstance connected with the death of Drusus, with which she appears to have made herself well acquainted, the amours of Sejanus and Livilla, their guilty hopes and machinations, and the means by which they effected the destruction of their victim. Having made this disclosure, and excited the horror and dismay of the emperor to a pitch of frenzy, she put an end to her own life. Eight years had elapsed since the crime had been committed; but means for investigating the circumstances were still at hand, nor were objects wanting on whom the thirst for vengeance might be wreaked. The slaves and other agents employed were sought out and questioned in the presence of Tiberius at Capræ, and the guilt of Livilla established beyond a doubt.<sup>1</sup> The public execution of a daughter of the imperial house was still an act from which the emperor would shrink; but he had other means not less sure for punishing her, and the report that, spared the cord or the falchion, she was starved to death in the custody of Antonia seems not unworthy of belief.<sup>2</sup>

Vengeance on  
the murderers  
of Drusus.

Early in the year 785 Tiberius crossed the narrow strait which separates Capræ from Surrentum, and made a progress

<sup>1</sup> The stories of the tortures which used to be enacted in the presence of Tiberius at Capræ for his amusement, of the bodies thrown over the cliffs, &c. (Suct. *Tib.* 62.), originated probably in the report of the proceedings of this domestic tribunal.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Suct. *Tib.* 62. with Dion, *lviii.* 11.

Tiberius quits  
Capree and ap-  
proaches Rome.

along the Campanian coast, as if about to revisit his capital. The citizens, still willing to deceive themselves as to his character and motives, were exulting in the assurance that with the fall of Sejanus a marked and happy change would appear in his behaviour. To the blighting influence of an unworthy favourite they fondly ascribed the reserve, the moroseness, and hardness of their master's temper, forgetting how the germs of these vices had been already manifested in his early youth, and that they were such as advancing years could not fail to confirm and aggravate. But as they had lately clapped their hands with savage delight over every fresh victim offered to the emperor's safety, so they were now prepared to welcome the emperor himself, as one restored from an unjust exile, and to exchange with him smiles of mutual love and reviving confidence. From Rhodes he had returned to the cold embrace of a haughty father; from Capree he would be welcomed by the acclamations of a humble and self-reproachful people. But the ardent greeting they reserved for him was destined never to be tendered. They were surprised, perhaps, to hear that his excessive timidity had induced him to quit the land, and take refuge on board a trireme, which bore him up the Tiber, while guards attended on his progress, and rudely cleared away the spectators from either bank. Such was the strange fashion in which he ascended the river as far as the Cæsarean Gardens and the Naumachia of Augustus; but on reaching this spot, and coming once more beneath the hills of Rome, he suddenly turned his prow without landing, and glided rapidly down the stream, nor did he pause again till he had regained his island.<sup>1</sup> This extraordinary proceeding, the effect of fear or disgust, caused no doubt deep mortification among the populace. It was followed by indignant murmurs, and petulantly ascribed to the foulest motives. Such, it was muttered, was the caprice, not of a princeps or an imperator,

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 1.

the child of law and organized government, but of a king; such a king as ruled with despotic sway over the slaves of Asia; such a king as, guarded in the citadel of Ctesiphon or Artaxata, despised all human feelings, and trampled on all principles, sporting, for his selfish pleasure, with not the lives only, but the honour of his miserable subjects; such as tore from them their children to mutilate or deflower, and stimulated his brutal passions by the nobility of his victims. All this and worse was now freely ascribed to the recluse of Capræ: he slunk, it was asserted, from the sight of the good and pure, to the obscurity of his detestable orgies; he was the patron of panders, the sport of minions; he was drunk with wine, and drunk with blood; the details which were freely circulated of his cruelty and licentiousness were coloured from the most loathsome scenes of the stews and the slave-market.

Atrocious licentiousness ascribed to him.

Such, unfortunately, was the open and flagrant character of Roman vice, that even the best and purest of the citizens were too much familiarized with its worst features to shrink from describing it with hideous minuteness. We may be permitted to cast a veil over a picture which called up no blush on the face of that generation, the fidelity of which, as regards Tiberius himself, we have no right either to affirm or deny. The excessive sensuality of the Roman nobles, pampered by all the appliances of art and luxury, was in fact the frenzy of a class deprived of the healthy stimulus of public action, and raised above the restraints of decency and self-respect. The worst iniquities ascribed to Tiberius may be paralleled in the conduct of private individuals, the accounts of which may have been coloured by a prurient imagination, but at least have not been distorted by malice.<sup>1</sup> The senators, however,

This licentiousness the common vice of his class.

<sup>1</sup> If I accept the charges of Tacitus and Suetonius against Tiberius, it is from my persuasion of the general character of vice in high places, as portrayed by Juvenal, Pliny, Seneca, Petronius, and in fact almost every writer of these times. Gems, mosaics, and other objects have been found in modern times at Capri, representing, it is said, the very monstrosities indicated by the

evinced no shame at the degradation into which their chief had fallen. They hastened to vote that the estates of Sejanus should be confiscated, not to the treasury of the state, but to the private purse of the emperor; and then, apprehending perhaps that his late hasty retreat had been caused by distrust of his subjects, ordained that whenever he vouchsafed to visit the Curia a special guard of their own body should attend upon him. A similar honour had been tendered to Julius Cæsar, and even Augustus, on a certain occasion, had availed himself of such a protection; it is not easy, therefore, to understand why it should have been left in this case to one of the least considerable of the order to propose, or be discussed and sanctioned with a smile of ridicule.<sup>1</sup> Tiberius, however, declined the equivocal compliment, which, indeed, would have little served to calm his fears had he really entertained the intention of again entering the senate-house; for it was among his proposed guards themselves, of whom few were not related to or associated with some of his victims, that his most dangerous enemies were numbered. At this moment his breast was torn by conflicting alarms. When his first fury against Sejanus was satiated, or his first blind apprehensions removed, he showed an inclination to desist from the proscription, and allow himself in more than one instance to be swayed to mercy; not from compassion or clemency perhaps, but through fear of irritating too many families, and aggravating the perils against which he was guarding. But, on the other hand, the spirit of delation which he had evoked was now too potent to be laid. It had become the ambition, the glory, the livelihood of many; and to deprive them of it was to sow the seeds of perilous dis-

historians, and have been considered as conclusive proofs of the facts charged against him. It is quite possible, however, that these objects were suggested by the descriptions themselves. At all events it must be remembered that the island was occupied by many successive proprietors after Tiberius, and among them by the virtuous M. Aurelius, all of whom must have had these indecent figures constantly in their sight. The age and the class must bear their share of the common guilt: "*factum defendite vestrum, consensistis enim.*"

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 2.; Dion, lvi. 17.

satisfaction among the cleverest, the boldest, and the most desperate class of citizens. While trimming the vessel of his fortunes between this Scylla and Charybdis, another rock soon appeared ahead. News was brought to Rome that a pretender to the name of the unfortunate Drusus, still a prisoner in the palace, had appeared in Achaia and Asia, and had deceived many by the similarity of his person, and the devotion to him of some of the freedmen of the emperor himself. As the reputed son of Germanicus he was received in various quarters with open arms. The Greeks were easily moved by anything strange and novel; the legions of Egypt and Syria, to which he was making his way, had loved and admired the man he claimed for his father. But the vigour of the imperial commanders speedily checked his enterprise. He was pursued across the *Ægean* and the Isthmus of Corinth to Nicopolis in Epirus, where, it appeared, having been more strictly interrogated, he had retracted his first assertion, and represented himself as of noble, but inferior and less invidious parentage. From Epirus he had taken ship as if for Italy, while the emperor was duly apprised by his lieutenants that he might be expected to arrive there. This, according to some accounts, was the last that was publicly heard of him: other writers, however, pretended to know for certain that he fell into the hands of the emperor, and was promptly destroyed.'

An impostor  
arrested and  
put to death.

The miserable ends of Drusus and Agrippina, which followed at no long interval, were possibly determined and hastened by this untoward event. When Tiberius perceived how easily even a false Drusus might lead a movement against him, he might be impelled at last to make his decision regarding the fate of the real one. What that decision would be could not be for a moment doubtful. The poor youth had been too fearfully wronged to be again trusted with liberty. Yet Tiberius

Horrible end  
of the young  
Drusus.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus (*Ann.* v. 10.) relates this occurrence towards the end of the year 784, while Dion (*lvi.* 25.) places it as late as 787, supposing, perhaps, that it could not have occurred before the death of the real Drusus.

must have regretted the step he had taken, at the suggestion of Sejanus, of alienating his innocent kinsman from him. It was not that he wished to clear the field of promotion for a grandson by the removal of his grand-nephews. To Caius, the youngest son of Germanicus, he was at the moment displaying the highest favour, while he kept his mother and brother in such cruel durance. To the stripling Caius he seemed already to hold out the prospect of succession: he bred him under his own eye at Capræ; he kept him close in attendance on his person, and gave him in marriage one of the noblest maidens of the city, the daughter of M. Junius Silanus.<sup>1</sup> It was rumoured, not unnaturally, that he was about to reconcile himself to the surviving members of his nephew's family, to atone for the death of Nero by the release and reinstatement in their proper honours of Drusus and Agrippina. But the relentless monster had determined far otherwise. Not only had he destined Drusus, after three years' confinement, to death; but he allowed him to perish in lingering torment by withholding from him necessary food. On the subject of death by starvation the Romans seem to have had a peculiar feeling which we can hardly understand. In many cases of suicide which occurred about this period, we find the sufferer choosing rather to perish miserably by inanition than to give himself a blow. More particularly we may observe in the imperial murders which have been recorded, that the victim was often left to die of mere want, and untouched by the sword. A superstitious notion may have been current that death by famine was a kind of divine infliction; it might seem like simply leaving nature to take its appointed course. The Romans were so familiar with the practice of exposing infants, and even the infirm and old among their slaves, that they may have regarded with some lenity the crime of murder in this, as they deemed it, extenuated form. It was merely, forsooth, leaving to the care of the gods those whom it was incon-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 12.; Tac. *Ann.* vi. 20. M. Junius Silanus was the brother of Decimus Silanus, the paramour of the younger Julia.

venient or impolitic to care for oneself. Tiberius, with a bluntness of perception which seems almost inconceivable, addressed a letter to the senate, detailing in the minutest way the circumstances of this miserable death, showing how the poor wretch had prolonged his existence for nine days by gnawing the stuffing of his pallet, and recording every sigh and groan he had uttered, even to the last imprecations he had heaped on his tormentor. Every syllable was duly vouched by the testimony of slaves, who had been set to watch his last moments. It is impossible to believe that this was a mere wanton piece of unnatural cruelty. It must have had a political purpose; and we may conjecture that it was meant, first, to establish on unquestionable testimony, the actual demise of Drusus; and, secondly, to prove that no drop of the Julian blood had been shed, no spark of his divine spirit extinguished, by the hand of the executioner.<sup>1</sup>

The senate shuddered, we are assured, with horror at the recital of this abominable epistle; but the prosecution of the house of Germanicus had not yet reached its climax. After the downfall of Sejanus, in whom <sup>Agrippina</sup> ~~starves herself~~ she recognised her fiercest enemy, Agrippina may have allowed herself to indulge fresh hopes. But it soon became only too manifest that the crimes of Sejanus, by which she had herself so grievously suffered, were made a pretext for cruelties with which they had no connexion, and that the exasperation of the emperor against his old minister would bring no alleviation to the lot of that minister's victims. She continued to linger in cheerless exile: whether in that solitude she was afflicted with the intelligence of her two elder sons' miserable end, or suffered to learn the favour with which her youngest was at the same time entertained, she seems in either case to have soon despaired for herself, and to have resolved to escape by her own deed from miseries which were now past relief. It was reported that she put an end to her own existence by pertinacious abstinence from

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 24.; Suet. *Tib.* 65.; Dion, *lvi.* 13. (A. U. 786. A. D. 33.)



food, in spite of the emperor's command that nourishment should be forced upon her; an act of fortitude not unworthy of her determined and vigorous character. Even after her death Tiberius was base enough to insult her memory, by charging her with a criminal amour, and insinuating that she had abandoned life in disgust and mortification at the execution of her lover Asinius. The common voice of her fellow-citizens, not too prone to believe in virtue, absolved her from this foul accusation; her faults were not those at least of feminine weakness, and had her chastity been assailable, it would not perhaps have withstood the artifices of Sejanus.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, that her memory might be branded with ignominy, Tiberius required the senate to pronounce the anniversary of her birth a day of evil omen, and to note in the calendar as providential coincidence that her death had occurred on the day of the punishment of Sejanus. He claimed credit for himself that he had not taken her life by violent means, and had forbore from exposing her body in the Gemoniæ. The senate acquiesced and applauded as it was required, and decreed solemn thanks to the emperor for his clemency; moreover, that a yearly festival should be celebrated on the auspicious eighteenth of October. The remains of Agrippina and her children were excluded from the mausoleum of the Cæsars, until Caius at a later period caused them to be exhumed from their ignoble sepulchres and removed to the resting-place which became them.<sup>2</sup>

The prosecution meanwhile of the friends of Sejanus had continued unabated, the emperor vying with his own creatures and flatterers in discovering matter of accusation against every one who could be proved or credibly suspected of participation in his guilt.

**Massacre of the  
proscribed  
friends of Sejanus.**

<sup>1</sup> I will not dwell upon the faults of Agrippina; but it must be observed that even Tacitus represents them in very strong language: "Æqui impatiens, dominandi avida, virilibus curis foeminarum vitia exuerat."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 25. Agrippina died on the 18th of October, 786, two years after Sejanus. Comp. Suet. *Tib.* 33, 54.; *Calig.* 15.; Dion, lviil. 22., lix. 2. The bones of Drusus only were dispersed and could not be recovered.

But Tiberius had actually shed the blood of a few only: his victims were quartered as captives on the magistrates and nobles, or confined, perhaps, in stricter durance within his own palace. Some of them had been plundered and reduced to beggary: some, perhaps, had been tortured; some were guilty, but their lives protected by their powerful connexions; other, unquestionably innocent, might be personally obnoxious. Tiberius was harassed by the anxiety of determining how to apportion their punishments; whom it might be safe to pardon, and whom it would be invidious to destroy. Suddenly the tyrant was seized with a horrid caprice, a fit, it may be, of madness, on the verge of which his unquiet brain was ever trembling, and he conceived the idea of relieving himself from his perplexity by a single stroke of the pen. He issued an order, such as there was no parallel for in his previous policy, and such as, in one so little wont to initiate a novelty either in counsel or in act, can hardly be ascribed to anything but uncontrollable frenzy, that all the captives of the Sejanian conspiracy should at once be put to death as traitors. The order was executed without compunction. Not men only, but women; not adults only, but children, were involved in the frightful massacre: some were noble, many of baser birth; in some places they perished singly, in others they fell in promiscuous slaughter one upon another. The mangled bodies were exposed in the Gemoniæ, and guards were placed around to drive away their mourning relatives, or to watch and report their lamentations. After some days' exposure the remains were dragged to the river bank and flung into the stream, and even those which were cast back upon the land were forbidden the rites of sepulture. The common duties of humanity, says Tacitus, were abandoned in the general terror; and all natural compassion cowered in silence beneath the tyranny that reigned rampant in every quarter.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 19. Comp. Suet. (*Tib.* 61.), who, however, specifies twenty as the greatest number that fell, at least on any one day, and the massacre probably passed off in a single paroxysm. The language of Tacitus, it may be pre-

It has been suggested that there may have been a touch of insanity in the conduct of Tiberius at this period, and certainly there is something more than the mere atrocity of the acts themselves to countenance a supposition which may afford, perhaps, a slight relief to the mind of the reader. The blood of the Claudii, as we have before noticed, was tainted, apparently through many generations, with an hereditary vice, sometimes manifesting itself in extravagant pride and insolence, at others in ungovernable violence; and the whole career of Tiberius from his youth upwards, in its abrupt alternations of control and indulgence, of labour and dissipation, had been such in fact as might naturally lead to the unsettlement of his mental powers. This inward disturbance showed itself in a very marked manner in the startling inconsistency which became now more and more apparent in his conduct. While at this period Tacitus denounces in the most glowing terms the vehemence and recklessness of his cruelty, the particular anecdotes he relates of his behaviour are generally indicative of transient fits of leniency. He was extremely sensitive, says Suetonius, to the pasquinades which circulated against him in the capital, to the imputation freely cast on him of degrading and secret enormities, and to the furious invectives of his perishing victims. The king of the Parthians had the audacity to address him a letter, in which he noted with disgust his indolence and shameless indulgences, and urged him to satisfy by a voluntary death the sentiment of universal execration. Yet these charges and insults Tiberius himself freely published to the world at the very time that he complained so bitterly of them: no man could say

sumed, is considerably exaggerated. But Lucan's tableau of the proscriptions is not improbably coloured from the account he had himself heard from the witnesses of this dreadful sacrifice (ii. 101.):

"Nobilitas cum plebe perit, lateque vagatur  
 Ensis, et a nullo revocatum est pectore ferrum . . . .  
 . . . . nec jam alveus amnem,  
 Nec retinent ripæ, redeuntque cadavera campo."

worse things of him than he spontaneously and consciously admitted of himself in the extraordinary revelations he made of his own feelings. At last, we are told, he fell into a state of disgust and desperation. A letter he addressed to the senate has been in part preserved to us by his awe-stricken contemporaries, whom it deeply impressed, breathing as it does the very spirit of incipient madness in the terrors of a distressed conscience, unable to fasten on the precise and proper object of its perturbation. *What to write to you, Fathers, at this juncture, he said, or how not to write, or what to forbear from writing, the Gods confound me worse than I feel day by day confounded, if I know.*<sup>1</sup> So had his crimes and abominations, says Tacitus, redounded to his own punishment. *Nor in vain, the historian goes on to moralize, was the wisest of philosophers wont to maintain that, could the hearts of tyrants be opened to our gaze, we should behold there the direst wounds and ulcers; for the mind is torn with cruelty, lust, and evil inclinations, not less truly than the body by blows.*<sup>2</sup>

The despair of the now miserable tyrant is hardly less strongly marked in his distress at the circumstances of the death of an attached adviser and servant, Cocceius Nerva, a man held high in repute as a legal authority, and one whose character and attainments were among the most respectable supports of the Casarean government. The fortunes of Nerva were flourishing in the full sunshine of his master's favour; his health of body was unimpaired, and his mind mature and vigorous: he had no outward cause of chagrin, none of apprehension for the future. Yet this man, it was announced, had formed the resolution of terminating his own existence; for it had become the fashion to make an avowal to one's friends and family of such an intention. Tiberius sought the suicide's chamber, where he was

His mortification at the suicide of Cocceius Nerva.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 6. under the date 785: "His verbis exorsus est, Quid scribam vobis, P. C., aut quomodo scribam, aut quid omnino non scribam hoc tempore, Di me Desque pejus perdant quam perire me quotidie sentio, si sciam."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* l. c. from Plato *de Republ.* p. 575.; Ritter in loc.

calmly awaiting, in discourse with his friends and relations, with resolute refusal of all sustenance, a slow and painful death. Tiberius entreated him to explain the motive of this desperate determination, to which, however, the sufferer could not be persuaded to return a distinct answer. With friendly zeal he solicited him to desist from it, but again without success. Lastly, he urged how injurious it would be to his own reputation as emperor, if one of his nearest intimates should thus make, as it were, his escape from life without even assigning a motive to allay the agitation of the public mind. Nerva calmly waived all discussion upon the subject, and the all-powerful ruler found himself repulsed and impotent in the presence of one who had sentenced himself to death. Those who were best acquainted with the real sentiments of the suicide averred that the melancholy state of affairs had filled the sage's mind with alarm and indignation, and that he had deliberately resolved to shun the future with honour, while still uninjured and unassailed.<sup>1</sup>

Nor, it may be believed, did the example of Nerva remain without imitators. None of them, however, was so illustrious as L. Arruntius, a noble, as we have seen, so distinguished in character and position that Augustus had not omitted to note him among those chiefs of the senate who might, as he said, have contended with his own heir for the empire. This man, however, notwithstanding this invidious distinction, and in spite of the crabbed humour with which he had ventured to gibe at the emperor himself, had escaped unharmed almost to the last year of Tiberius. Yet from the fortitude of his crowning act we believe that he had merited this escape by no unworthy compliances: he had merely abstained from irritating his master's jealousy by measuring himself with him in overt opposition. On the occurrence of a disastrous inundation, it was to Arruntius that the task was assigned of providing for the future security of the city, which involved perhaps

voluntary  
death of Arruntius.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 28.

some arbitrary interference with the rights of property, of which the Romans, however great the necessity for it might be, were always excessively jealous. At one period Tiberius proposed to remove him from Rome by the honourable appointment of a government in Spain; but again, unable to prevail on himself to entrust a possible rival with so much power, he had kept him by his own side in the capital, requiring him to execute his office by the hands of legates. The delators had been eager to fasten a charge upon one who stood so exposed to their aim; but he had defeated at least one accusation, and secured the punishment of his assailants. At last, however, he was more fatally involved in a charge brought against a certain Albucilla, the wife of Satrius, the denouncer of Sejanus. Treasonable practices, impiety, as it was phrased, against the emperor, had been alleged against her; and as the looseness of her conduct was notorious, the known or supposed partners of her debauchery were presumed from that circumstance to be concerned also in her disloyalty. Among these was Arruntius; but so little could be really advanced against him, or so adverse or indifferent was Tiberius to the prosecution, that the accused were permitted to remain at large with only a vague charge hanging over them. Some of them by merely keeping quiet escaped all further animadversion. The friends of Arruntius would have persuaded him to rely on the emperor's clemency, and make no movement on his own part. But he proudly refused to owe his safety to an evasion. *The same conduct*, he declared, *does not become all men alike. I have lived long enough. I have nothing to regret but having endured life so long amidst so many insults and dangers, exposed as I have been to the arrogance formerly of Sejanus, and now of Macro*:—for Macro had by this time become almost as obnoxious as his predecessor.—*True, I might perhaps still secure myself for the brief period which yet remains to the aged emperor; but how could I hope to escape intact through the reign of his successor?* With these words he caused his veins to be opened, and allowed himself to bleed to death. He foresaw a

more intolerable servitude impending, and resolved to flee alike from the recollection of the past, and the prospect of the future. Though Arruntius himself might have escaped on this occasion, Albucilla was eventually condemned and executed; while those of her accomplices were selected for banishment or disgrace who were most obnoxious for their crimes, and particularly for that of delation.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of his terrors and his cruelties Tiberius was distressed and perhaps amazed at the evidence these deeds afforded of the horror in which his government was now held. If in the proscription of all, even of his nearest kin, who had seemed to menace his power, he had shown himself sanguinary and relentless, yet these were but few in number; they belonged, moreover, as he might presume, to a class too far exalted above the mass even of the nobles of Rome to excite much general sympathy. Why, he might ask, should the Romans interest themselves in mere family quarrels, and the bootless question, which candidate for the tyranny should actually climb the throne? But, on the other hand, he may have flattered himself that in the punishment of many bad citizens, by which his reign had been distinguished, he had shown a sense of equity and public spirit. Every Roman was concerned in his overthrow of an upstart like Sejanus; in the just retribution he had launched at the detestable delators, the foes not of the prince but of the people themselves; in the high moral feeling he had displayed in chastising the vices of women of quality; in pronouncing sentence on an Albucilla, a Claudia, an Urgulania, and recently on Plancina: for the wife of Cnæus Piso, though long protected, first by the favour of Livia, and still later by the disinclination of Tiberius to give a triumph to Agrippina, had at last been sacrificed to the unappeased enmity of the citizens. He might affect to plead for himself, as his successor afterwards pleaded for him, that it was not he that had warred against the senate, but the senators against

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the policy of Ti-  
berius.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 47, 48. under the year 790.

one another. Of the four great nobles indeed whom Augustus specified as not unfit to compete with him for empire, three had since perished by violent deaths. Nor can Tiberius himself be relieved from the guilt of effecting the death of Asinius Gallus. Of neither Piso, however, nor Arruntius could it be said that he had devised and compassed his destruction; and the consideration in which Lepidus continued to be held shows that the highest rank and position were not necessarily fatal to their possessor.<sup>1</sup> M. Æmilius Lepidus, the son of Æmilius Paulus and a Fausta Cornelia, who thus combined in his origin descent from the most illustrious of the Roman houses, might have considered himself a far greater man than any Octavius or Antonius, and have looked down with complacent superiority upon even a Julius or a Claudius. But this distinguished noble had acquiesced in the choice, if such we may call it, of the Roman people: taught by the insignificance into which his kinsman the triumvir had fallen, that the day of great names had passed, that the nobles were unworthy to bear rule and the people incompetent, he had suffered the chief of the Claudii to take precedence of him in the senate; and while occupying himself the second place, he had used his influence discreetly and liberally, and had succeeded more than once in tempering the severity of his colleagues.<sup>2</sup> Another of the notabilities of the preceding reign, who had also retained his honours under Tiberius, was Lucius Piso, chief pontiff and prefect of the city, a man of ability without ambition, who had discharged the functions of a difficult post with tact and considerateness, while in the senate his voice had always been given on the side of justice, and when that was defeated, had at least recommended moderation.<sup>3</sup> Such were the

<sup>1</sup> These four nobles are here mentioned together, because Tacitus leaves it uncertain whether Cnæus Piso or Arruntius was one of the three especially designated by Augustus. "De prioribus (i.e. Gallus and Lepidus) consentitur; pro Arruntio quidam Cn. Pisonem tradidere." He adds, untruly as we have seen: "Omnesque præter Lepidum, variis mox criminibus, struente Tiberio, circumventi sunt." *Ann.* i. 18.

<sup>2</sup> For instances of the influence of Lepidus, see Tac. *Ann.* iii. 50., iv. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Vell. ii. 98.; Tac. *Ann.* vi. 10.: "L. Piso pontifex, rarum in tanta clar-



men who, without despairing of their position, and flying to death or retirement, could find a sphere for their virtues even under the strong constraint of the imperial government; and from more than one passage of Tacitus, severe as he is in judging the crimes and policy of Tiberius, it appears to have been well understood among the nobles, that *even under bad princes there is still a sphere for great men; that loyalty and moderation combined with industry and vigour obtain the more genuine honour, from the proneness of the proud and turbulent to rush on certain ruin without advantage to any.*<sup>1</sup>

It may be true that Tiberius, in one of his gloomiest moods, dissatisfied with himself yet indignant at the dissatisfaction of his people, actually gave vent to his vexation in the memorable quotation from a

Question of  
succession to  
the empire.

tragic writer, *After my death perish the world in fire.*<sup>2</sup> But the same sentiment has been ascribed to other tyrants in later times, and may be regarded as expressive merely of the judgment mankind in general have formed of their extravagant selfishness. As regards Tiberius, indeed, it may have been put into his mouth by a later generation which had suffered under the sway of successors even worse than himself, and believed that in consigning them to such ruthless rulers he had evinced a wanton indifference to their misery, if not rather a fiendish exultation in it. But our estimate of the conduct of Tiberius in this particular must be founded on a fair consideration of the circumstances in which he was placed. We must not suffer ourselves to be

tudine, facto obiit" (ann. 785): "nullius servilis sententiæ sponte auctor, et quotiens necessitas ingrueret, cupienter moderans . . . . *Ætas ad octogesimum annum processit . . . . præcipua ex eo gloria quod præfectus urbi recens continuam potestatem, et insolentia parendi graviorem, mire temperavit.*" For the scandalous charges against the prefect Piso, see above, chap. xlii.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 20.; *Agric.* 42.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lvii. 23.: τοῦτο τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐμὸν θάνατος γαῖα μὲν ἔσται πύρι. See the allusions to the sentiment in the ancients, Cic. *de fin.* i. 19.; Senec. *de Clem.* ii. 2.; Suet. *Ner.* 38.; Claudian in *Rufin.* ii. 19. in Reimar's note. Comp. Suet. *Tib.* 62.: "Idem feliciem Priamum vocabat, quod superstes omnium suorum extitisset."

biased by the notions of a later age, to which the principle of direct appointments had become familiar. After weighing the statements of different writers, we shall see reason probably to accede to that of Tacitus in preference to others, according to whom Tiberius made no appointments, designations, or recommendation of a successor to the imperial prerogatives. He could not have done so without directly violating the settled principle of his government, which he pretended to found on the spontaneous concession of the people. The establishment of monarchy was not even yet recognised as a constitutional fact. The chief of the Julii might appoint, like any private citizen, the heir to the domestic rites and honours of his house; but this inheritance conveyed no title to the Imperium or Principate, the Consular or the Tribunitian power. Herein lay, as Tiberius was well aware, the secret of the new government's weakness; this uncertainty as to the future was the main cause of the tyranny into which he had himself insensibly lapsed. No greater blessing could have been bestowed on the Romans by a wise and honest ruler than the transmutation of their polity from a pretended commonwealth to an acknowledged monarchy. But dire experience had not yet perhaps taught them to acquiesce in the assumption by their dying chief of a power over their political future. Would they respect his disposition of their indefeasible prerogatives after his decease? Would they not, on the contrary, resent it? This was a question which Augustus had not ventured to ask. Yet the founder of the empire had been too deeply interested in the success of his work to leave its prospects to blind chance. He had shown himself anxious, during his own term of government, to pave the way for the recognition of his intended successor, by gradually investing the proposed heir of his private fortunes with public honours and titles akin to his own; so that Tiberius had been able, on his father's decease, to glide, almost unobserved, into the sovereign power. Such undoubtedly was the generous policy which became a ruler to whom the interests of the state were really

dear, and who sought to found the greatness of his own house on the prosperity of the people. But to such a policy the spirit of Tiberius was not perhaps equal. A cruel misfortune had deprived him of Germanicus; but so had Augustus also lost his Agrippa. Drusus was removed from him by the treachery of an unworthy favourite; but in like manner his predecessor had had to mourn the early and ill-omened loss of Caius and Lucius. Here, however, the parallel ceased. While the first princeps continued after every disappointment to repeat his genuine efforts to secure the principles of family succession, and called Tiberius himself, in default of still nearer kinsmen, into alliance and partnership in the empire; the second sacrificed all to an unworthy jealousy, and chose rather to murder his nephews than to risk the chance of being supplanted by them.

Accordingly, towards the end of his career, Tiberius found himself supported by only three surviving males of the lineage of Cæsar, and none of these had received any training in public life. Tiberius Claudius Drusus, Surviving members of the Imperial family. born in the year 744, was the last of the sons of the eldest Drusus, and the nephew of the reigning emperor, by whom he had been adopted on his father's death, at the desire of Augustus. But Claudius (to give him the name by which he will become familiarly known to us) was reputed to be infirm both in health and understanding. Like Agrippa Postumus, he was destined from early youth to be excluded from public affairs, and all political instruction had been purposely withheld from him. Yet he was not perhaps destitute of talents; he devoted himself to the study of books, and possibly he appreciated them, while the weakness of his bodily frame contributed to keep him from the ruder and coarser diversions, to which the want of practical employment might have driven a bolder and more vigorous man. His character and attainments, however, we shall have a future occasion to estimate more precisely: for the present it is enough to say that he had probably owed his life, amidst the fall of so many of his relations, to the general

conviction that he was unfit to rule, and therefore not to be feared as a candidate for the suffrages of the people. Upon him the emperor scarcely deigned to bestow a thought at this crisis. Two others, however, there were, both much younger than Claudius, between whom the hopes of the Julian house were divided: Caius, the youngest son of Germanicus, and Tiberius, surnamed Gemellus, the child of the second Drusus; the one grand-nephew, the other grandson, of the emperor, but both equally reputed his sons or grandsons by adoption.<sup>1</sup> Of these Caius was born in the year 765, Tiberius in 772.<sup>2</sup> The former had been enrolled at an early age among the augurs and pontiffs, and had since been advanced to the quaestorship, the first step in the legitimate career of honours; the latter had not yet been introduced into public life, his tender years hardly yet permitting it. From neither of these striplings certainly could the emperor anticipate any rivalry with himself; but untried and almost unknown as they still were, he shrank from insulting even his subservient senate by claiming for them the highest prerogatives. The daughters of Germanicus he had married to citizens of distinction. Julia was united to Vinicius, whose municipal and equestrian extraction had been recently illustrated by the rise of both his father and grandfather to the consulship.<sup>3</sup> Drusilla had wedded a Cassius, whose family was plebeian, though it vied with the noblest of Rome in antiquity and reputation, besides the peculiar lustre which had been shed upon it in more recent times. A third daugh-

<sup>1</sup> It has been mentioned before that Agrippina had borne five sons and four daughters to Germanicus. The deaths of Nero and Drusus have been recorded in their place: two other sons seem to have died in infancy. Caius, the youngest of the five, was now the sole survivor.

<sup>2</sup> This Tiberius had also the name of Gemellus, which seems to show that he was one of the male twins whom Livilla bore to Drusus in the year 772. Tac. *Ann.* ii. 84.; see above, chap. xlii. The other child, as has been said, probably died in infancy.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 15. Vinicius, the patron of Velleius Paterculus, was probably an adherent of Sejanus, and owed his alliance with the Cæsarean family to the favour of so powerful a friend.

ter, who bore her mother's name, Agrippina, was affianced to a man of higher rank than either of these, a Cneus Domitius Ahenobarbus, descended lineally from the three Domitii whose names have been successively signalized in these pages. A fourth, whose name has not been recorded, was united to the son of Quintilius Varus. Again, after the death of her husband Nero Germanicus, the younger Julia, the daughter of Drusus and Livilla, had been espoused to Rubellius Blandus, a second connexion which might properly be regarded as an unworthy descent from the first, inasmuch as his nobility dated only from the last generation.<sup>1</sup> But in casting his eyes on these, and perhaps other scions of the old aristocracy, Tiberius could discover none whose eminence entitled him to be exalted above all the rest of his order; the levelling effects of his tyranny were already manifest in the general mediocrity of talent in the senate, and the public mind was not unprepared to admit the rule of hereditary succession as a state necessity.

The bitterest of Tiberius's enemies admits, not as it would seem without some inconsistency, that he was anxious at heart to settle the succession on a secure footing, and would have disregarded, in making his choice, the opinion of his contemporaries, could he have felt assured of the approbation of a grateful posterity. Nevertheless, after much restless deliberation, the failing old man was constrained to leave it in all the uncertainty above described:

Tiberius appoints Caius and Tiberius Gemellus heirs of his private fortune.

A. D. 85.  
A. U. 783.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 27.: "Cujus avum Tiburtem equitem Romanum plerique meminerant." Juvenal (viii. 39.) employs the name of Rubellius to represent the pride of those who have greatness thrust upon them:

"Tecum est mihi sermo, Rubelli

Blande: tames alto Drasorum stemmate tanquam

Feceris ipse aliquid propter quod nobilis esses.

Ut te conciperet quæ sanguine fulget Iuli;

Non quæ ventoso conducta sub aggere textit."

Domitius, Vinicius, Cassius, and Rubellius are mentioned together in *Ann.* vi. 45. as the four progeneri, grandsons-in-law of Tiberius.

ne abandoned to fate, says Tacitus, the decision to which he was himself unequal.<sup>1</sup> But already in the year 788 he had made a testament, appointing Caius and Tiberius co-partners in his private heritage, with whatever advantage might thence accrue to them in regard to their public pretensions; and in the event of the death of either, the survivor was destined to inherit from the deceased.<sup>2</sup> The elder of the two princes at least was not unmoved by the prospect of the fortunes which seemed so likely to befall him. Caius was not insensible to the advantage he enjoyed in popular favour, and especially among the soldiers, as the son of Germanicus. Though actually born in the peaceful retirement of Antium, he had been carried in infancy to the stations of the Rhenish legions, and bred up in the midst of the soldiery, and he gladly countenanced, we may suppose, the common belief that he had first seen the light in the camp.<sup>3</sup> As a child, he had been accoutred in the military garb, and it was from the boots, or caligæ, which he was made to wear, that the soldiers gave him his familiar nickname of Caligula. The mutiny on the Rhine was actually quelled, it was said, by showing to the troops their young pet and playfellow. But these rude carresses were not, as he early learnt, to be accepted without danger, and he

Caius Germanicus Cæsar, nicknamed Caligula.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 45.: "Quippe illi non perinde curæ gratia præsentium quam in posteros ambitio: mox incertus animi, fesso corpore consilium, cui impar erat, fato permisit."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 76.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 8.: "Ubi natus sit incertum diversitas tradentium facit. Cn. Lentulus Gaetulicus Tiburi genitum scribit; Plinius Secundus in Treveris, vico Ambiatino, supra confluentes . . . . Versiuli, imperante mox eo divulgati, apud hibernas legiones procreatum indicant:

In castris natus, patriis nutritus in armis

Jam designati Principis omen erat.

Egno in actis Antii editum invenio."

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 41.; Dion, *lvii.* 5.; Suet. *Calig.* 9.: "Caligula cognomen castræni joco traxit, quia manipulario habitu inter milites educabatur . . . . post excessum Augusti tumultuantes . . . . solus haud dubie conspectu suo flexit."

was careful to disguise the pleasure he took in the favour in which the citizens held him. Nor less anxiously did he conceal any emotions of an opposite character, which the sufferings of his mother or brothers may have awakened in his breast. A practised dissembler from his early years, for from the first dawn of consciousness he found himself the inhabitant of a palace, and closely attached to the person of the all-dreaded emperor, he studied to clothe his countenance day by day with the expression assumed by Tiberius himself, to penetrate his sentiments and echo, as it were, his very words. He was ever on the watch to anticipate the wishes of the tyrant, and, at a later time, the remark of the orator Passienus obtained a great success, that no man was ever a better servant, or a worse master.<sup>1</sup>

Caius Cæsar, by the direction of his grandsire, had married in 786 Claudia, or Claudilla, the daughter of M. Junius Silanus; but this consort he had lost in the third year of their union.<sup>2</sup> At this latter period the end of Tiberius was visibly approaching. While his bodily strength was failing his mind continued unimpaired, and the power as well as the habit of dissimulation retained its full vigour to the last. No consciousness of his own decay could extort from him any disclosures of his actual views regarding the imperial inheritance. The ambitious and intriguing spirits at Rome trembled in uncertainty as to the future, and Tiberius kept his courtiers still attached to his side by refusing to indicate by word or gesture in what quarter they should look for his successor. He even let it be supposed, it would seem, that, dissatisfied with the prospect opened to him within the limits of the Cæsarean family, he meditated removing both the grandson and the

Macro obtains  
ascendancy  
over him.

A. D. 86.  
A. U. 786

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 20.: "Immanem animum subdola modestia tegens . . . qualem diem Tiberius induisset, pari habitu, non multum distantibus verbis. Unde mox scitum Passieni oratoris dictum perccebit; neque mellorem unquam servum, neque deteriozem dominum fuisse."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 20. Suetonius (*Calig.* 12.) gives her name more correctly, Junia Claudilla. Dion is inaccurate in placing the marriage in 788.: lviii. 25.

grand-nephew by death.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the arts of the veteran dissembler could not blind the wariest of his observers. Since the overthrow of Sejanus, the bold and crafty Macro had wielded no small share of that minister's power, but he had never succeeded in gaining the personal favour and confidence of his master. Though at the head of the prætorians and of the police of the city, he had not been advanced to the more brilliant honours of the state. For these he must be content to look to the exigencies of a new reign, in which his talents and position might command still higher promotion; and it was now his object to divine the future emperor, and bind him to himself by some signal service. As shrewd in observation as he had proved himself bold in action, he fixed without hesitation upon Caius as the destined chief of the state. To secure an ascendancy over him he employed the artifices of his wife Ennia, who insinuated herself into the affections of the young and idle voluptuary at a moment when his fancy was unoccupied, and soon acquired for her husband all the influence he desired. *You leave the setting sun to court the rising*, muttered Tiberius, whom nothing could escape: but he gave no further token of displeasure, and the people accepted the words, which were speedily noised abroad, as an intimation that already in his own mind he had determined to transmit the empire to his grand-nephew. Another sentence, which was ascribed to him, seemed not less significant of this intention. Observing one day a cloud pass over the countenance of Caius, on his making a gesture of kindness towards the young Tiberius, for whom he seems to have felt some yearning of natural affection, he was reported to have said to him, *You will kill him and another will kill you.*<sup>2</sup> The young dissembler had never been able to impose on his uncle's practised sagacity. Tiberius had observed, not, it is said, without a malignant satisfaction, the gross sensuality and cruel or degrading sports in

<sup>1</sup> Suet. Tib. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. vi. 45.: "Occides tu hunc, et te alius." Dion, lviil. 23. Comp. Philo, l. c.



which he delighted, hoping, as was commonly surmised, that they would divert him from the aspirations of a premature ambition, or even expecting, as some ventured to suggest, that the crimes of the ensuing reign would extinguish the recollection of his own.<sup>1</sup>

Tacitus, as we have seen, assures us that Tiberius abandoned the imperial succession to fate; by which he evidently

Ideas regarding  
the disposal of  
the succession:  
expression of  
Tacitus.

means that the emperor addressed no direct injunction or recommendation to the senate upon a subject on which, as he well knew, he could exercise no real authority. In the phrase itself,

the current language of the philosophy of the time, there is nothing remarkable; nor do I imagine that there is any allusion in it to the story upon this subject narrated by Josephus, which deserves, however, to be recorded in illustration

Anecdote told  
by Josephus.

of the character of the age. Tiberius, says the Jewish historian, on his return to Capræ from his last visit to the continent, was seized with a consumptive attack, which at first did not threaten danger: but as the disorder gained ground he began to feel that his end was actually approaching; whereupon he commanded Euodus, the most confidential of his freedmen, to send his two grandchildren to him betimes the next morning, that he might address them before he died. After giving this direction, he prayed the gods to make known to him by some token which of the two they destined to succeed him: for although his wish was to leave the empire to the young Tiberius, he felt that his own inclination ought to yield to the manifestations of the divine will. Accordingly he proposed to himself a sign by which that will might be discovered; and this was, that whichever of the princes should first come into his presence, him he would regard as called to the empire. Having thus piously placed himself in the hands of the gods, he proceeded, with a natural inconsistency, to control, if possible, their decrees, by desiring the tutor of Tiberius to make sure

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ca'ig.* 11.; Dion, lvi. 23.

and bring his charge at the earliest hour possible. But this prince, spending some time over his morning meal, was actually forestalled by Caius, much to the emperor's regret, who was moved to tears at the unhappy fortune of his own offspring, not only excluded by providence from the sovereign power, but exposed, as he well knew, to the direct risk of destruction. Commanding himself, however, with a great effort he said to Caius, *My son, although Tiberius is nearer to myself than you are, yet both of my own choice, and in obedience to the gods, into your hands I commit the empire of Rome.* To these solemn words he added, according to the same authority, an earnest entreaty that he would continue to love his unprotected kinsman, enforced by a warning of the perils of his own position, and of the pains which wait on human ingratitude.<sup>1</sup>

Of all our principal authorities for the history of this period Josephus undoubtedly stands the nearest in point of time; nevertheless, bred as he was in the ideas of a foreigner or a provincial, his information on <sup>Last days of Tiberius.</sup> matters of constitutional principle is often at fault; and the anecdote just related is of little historical value, except as showing the more indulgent way in which the character of Tiberius might be regarded beyond the precincts of Rome or Italy. This writer is not indeed correct in the place he assigns for the death of the emperor, a point on which a Roman historian could hardly have made a mistake. It was early in the year 790 that Tiberius, now in his seventy-eighth year, quitted for the last time his retreat in Capræ, and moving slowly from villa to villa, arrived within seven miles of the city on the Appian Way. Again, having taken one more view of its distant buildings, he turned his back finally upon them, terrified, so it was reported, by an evil omen, and retraced his languid steps along the coast of Campania.<sup>2</sup> At Astura he fell sick; but having a little recovered he proceeded onwards to Circeii. Here, anxious to avert suspicion

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 6. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 72.: "Ostento territum."

of his illness, he not only presided at the exercises of the camp, but even cast javelins with his own hand at the beasts which were driven before his seat in the amphitheatre. By this exertion the old man both strained and overheated himself; yet though his symptoms grew worse, he insisted on continuing his progress as far as Misenum, where he possessed the voluptuous villa of Lucullus; nor would he allow any change to be made in his sensual and perhaps intemperate habits at table.<sup>1</sup> His courtiers and attendants looked on with awe and trepidation. Every one felt assured that the days of the tyrant were numbered; yet every one feared to pay his court too soon by a day or an hour to the expected heir of his fortunes. All eyes were turned on Charicles, the emperor's confidential physician; and Caius himself, perhaps, was the first to urge him to contrive to feel the dying man's pulse, for Tiberius persisted to the last in disguising his actual condition, and thus ascertain how much life was yet left in him. Charicles, it seems, was about to quit the court for a few days: possibly his master had dismissed him on purpose to blind the eyes of the watchful observers around him. Rising from the table, and taking the emperor's hand to kiss it, he managed to touch the wrist. Tiberius noticed the touch and immediately guessed its motive. He called for fresh dishes and more wine, nor would he consent to break up the festivities till a later hour than ordinary.<sup>2</sup> On rising he even received one by one the salutations of all his guests, according to his wont, keeping all the while an erect posture, and addressing to each a word in reply. But Charicles had attained his object, and his science

<sup>1</sup> Suet. l. c.: "Nihil ex ordine quotidiano prætermitteret, se convivia quidem ac cæteras voluptates, partim intemperantia, partim dissimulatione." But Pliny, in the passage before cited (*Hist. Nat.* xiv. 28.), while he allows the intemperance of Tiberius in his youth, expressly declares that his abstemiousness was strict if not austere ("severus atque etiam sævus:": the words are perhaps corrupt) in this respect in later years. Tac. *Ann.* vi. 50.: "Jam Tiberium corpus, jam vires, nondum dissimulatio deserebat: idem animi rigor; sermone ac vultu intentus, quæsitæ interdum comitate quamvis manifestam defectionem tegebatur."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Instaurari epulas jubet, discumbitque ultra solitum."

was not to be deceived. He assured Macro that the patient could not survive more than two days. Tiberius was the more anxious, it was said, to regain Capræ, because he was offended at the neglect of the senate to expedite the condemnation of some criminals he had required it to sentence, and could not venture on a stroke of authority except from his inaccessible citadel. But whether or not this were so, his hopes and fears were all about to close, and Capræ he was destined never again to visit. Unfavourable weather combined with the advance of his malady to retain him at Misenum; and whether his dissolution was altogether natural, or hastened by foul means, as commonly suspected, it was not perhaps delayed beyond the term assigned to it by the physician. The actual circumstances of the tyrant's end were variously reported. On the 17th

His death.

of the calends of April, or the 16th of March, says Tacitus, he had fainted away, and it was imagined he had ceased to breathe. The courtiers trooped without delay to congratulate Caius, who quitted the chamber to surround himself, as was supposed, with the ensigns of power, when suddenly it was reported that the sick man's voice and vision had returned, and he had called to his attendants for nourishment. The consternation was universal; the crowd hastily dispersed, and every man framed his countenance to a look of ignorance or anxiety. Caius himself was struck speechless in expectation of immediate punishment. But Macro was at his side, and Macro was resolute and prompt as ever. *Heap more bedclothes upon him, he whispered, and leave him.* Tacitus insinuates without hesitation that he was stifled, and his account has been most commonly followed; he refers, however, to no authority.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, a contempo-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Cæsar in silentium fixus a summa spe novissima expectabat: Macro intrepidus, opprimi senem injectu multæ vestis jubet, discedique a limine."

<sup>2</sup> Thus Dion, lviil. 28.: δέσας οὖν ἐκεῖνος μὴ καὶ ἀληθῶς ἀνασθῆναι, οἷτε ἐμφαγεῖν τι αἰτήσαντι αὐτῆς, ὥς καὶ βλαβηρομένη, ἔδωκε, καὶ ἱμάτια πολλὰ καὶ παχέα, ὥς καὶ θερμασίας τινὸς δεομένη, προσέβαλε· καὶ οὕτως ἀπέπνιψεν αὐτὸν, συναραμνόντων αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ Μάκρωνος.

rary of the events seems to describe the old man's death as simply natural. Feeling himself sinking, said Seneca, Tiberius took off his ring, and held it for a little while, as if about to present it to some one as an instrument of authority; but soon replaced it on his finger, and lay for a time motionless: then suddenly he called for his attendants, and when no one answered, raised himself from his bed with failing strength, and immediately fell lifeless beside it.<sup>1</sup> This account was distorted by others into the denial of necessary sustenance, and actual death by exhaustion, while some did not scruple to affirm that Caius had caused him to be poisoned.<sup>2</sup>

Cæsar, the high-handed usurper, met an usurper's death, by open violence in the light of day. Augustus, after fifty years of the mildest and most equitable rule the times admitted, sank at last by a slow and painless decay into the arms of those dearest to him, amidst the respectful sympathies of an admiring people. The end of Tiberius, whether consummated by treachery or not, was shrouded in gloom and obscurity; the chamber of mortality was agitated to the last by the intrigues and fears of the dying man and his survivors. The fellow countrymen of the detested tyrant seem to have deemed it fitting that one whose life was to them a riddle should perish by a mysterious death. For my own part, I would rather represent him as a man whose character was sufficiently transparent, whose apparent inconsistencies, often exaggerated and misrepresented, may generally be explained by the nature of his position, and the political illusions with which he

The character  
of Tiberius not  
mysterious.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 73.: "Seneca eum scribit, intellecta defectione," &c. The elder Seneca, who is known to have written a history of his own times, died towards the end of Tiberius, at an advanced age. This must be the account of his son the philosopher; but there is no such passage in his existing works. Suetonius in another place (*Calig.* 12.) gives another account: "Caius veneno Tiberium aggressus est," &c.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus gives March 16. for the date of this event, Dion, March 26. Tiberius, born November, 712, was in the middle of his seventy-eighth year. Dion, l. c.: *ἐβίω δὲ ἔττα καὶ ἐβδομήκοντα ἔτη, καὶ μῆνας τέσσαρας, καὶ ἡμέρας ἑννέα.*

was required to encircle himself. It is the character of the age in which he was placed, an age of rapid though silent transition, rather than of the man himself, which invests him with an historical interest. This is the point to which it will be well to direct our attention, before letting the curtain drop on the personage with whom the forms of the republic perished, and the despotism of the Cæsars finally dropped its mask.<sup>1</sup>

The practice of delation, so rapidly developed under the rule of Tiberius, introduced a new principle into the government of his day, and marked it with features of its own. It is hardly possible to overrate the effects of this practice on the general complexion of the Roman polity, nor is it easy to exaggerate the horror with which it came to be regarded. It was an attempt to reconcile the despotism of the monarch with the forms of a republic; to strengthen the sovereign power by weakening its subjects; to govern the people by dividing them, by destroying their means of combination among themselves, by generating among them habits of mutual distrust and fear, and finally plunging them into a state of political imbecility. We have already seen how this system was in fact the product of peculiar circumstances rather than the creation of a deliberate will; nevertheless the chief of the state was made, not unnaturally, to bear the whole responsibility of it, and the disgust of the nobler spirits of Rome at the tyranny of spies and informers was turned against the prince himself, in whose interest at least, if not at whose instigation, their enormities were for the most part perpetrated. If we examine

Judgment of  
the Romans on  
the character  
of Tiberius.

<sup>1</sup> Thus Ferguson concludes his history of the Roman republic with the death of Tiberius. Tacitus describes, according to his view, the different epochs in the character of Tiberius. *Ann.* vi. 51.: "*Morum quoque tempora illi diversa: egregium vita famaue, quoad privatus, vel in imperiis sub Augusto fuit: occultum ac subdolum fingendis virtutibus, donec Germanicus ac Drusus superfuere: idem inter bona malaue mixtus, incolumi matre: intestabilis sævitia, sed obtectis libidinibus, dum Sejanum dilexit timuitve: postremo in scelera simul ac dedecora prorupit, postquam, remoto pudore et metu, suo tantum ingenio utebatur.*"

the authorities for the history of the reign we have been reviewing, we shall find that those who were nearest to the times themselves have generally treated Tiberius with the greatest indulgence. Velleius Paterculus indeed, and Valerius Maximus, his contemporaries and subjects, must be regarded as mere courtly panegyrists: but the adulation of the one, though it jars on ears accustomed to the dignified self-respect of the earlier Romans, is not more high-flown in language and sentiment than what our own writers have addressed to the Georges, and even the Charleses and Jameses, of the English monarchy; while that of the other is chiefly offensive from the connexion in which it stands with the lessons of virtue and patriotism which his book was specially designed to illustrate. The elder Seneca, the master of a school of rhetoric, to which science his writings are devoted, makes no mention of the emperor under whom he wrote; but his son, better known as the statesman and philosopher, though he was under the temptation of contrasting the austere and aged tyrant with the gay young prince to whom he was himself attached, speaks of him with considerable moderation, and ascribes the worst of his deeds to Sejanus and the delators rather than to his own evil disposition.<sup>1</sup> In the pages of Philo and Josephus, the government of Tiberius is represented as mild and equitable: it is not till we come to Suetonius and Tacitus, in the third generation, that his enormities are blazoned in the colours so painfully familiar to us. It will suffice here to remark that both these later writers belong to a period of strong reaction against the Cæsarean despotism, when the senate was permitted to raise its venerable head and resume a show at least of imperial prerogatives; when the secret police of Rome was abolished, delation firmly repressed, freedom of speech proclaimed by the voice of the emperor himself, and the birthright of the citizen respectfully restored to him. There ensued a strong revulsion of feeling, not against monarchy, which had then become an ac-

<sup>1</sup> Seneca, *Ep.* 21.; *de Benef.* iii. 26.; *Consol. ad Marc.* 15

cepted institution, but against the corruptions which had turned it into tyranny; and Tiberius, as the reputed founder of the system of delation, bore the odium of all the crimes of all the tyrants who had succeeded him. Tacitus admits that the *affairs of Tiberius* were misrepresented during his power by fear, and after his death by spite: yet we cannot doubt that Tacitus himself often yields to the bias of his detractors, while Suetonius is at best indifferent to the truth.<sup>1</sup> After all, a sober discretion must suspend its belief regarding many of the circumstances above recorded, and acknowledge that it is only through a treacherous and distorting haze that we have scanned the features of this ill-omened principate.

Nevertheless, the terror which prevailed in the last years of Tiberius, to whomsoever it is chiefly to be ascribed, exercised a baleful influence over society at Rome, and shows by effects which are still discoverable The reign of terror at Rome. that it has been but little exaggerated. It has left permanent traces of itself in the manifest decline and almost total extinction of literature under its pressure. The Roman writers addressed only a small class in the capital; to be popularly known in the provinces, to be read generally throughout the Roman world, was a privilege reserved for few, and anticipated perhaps rarely by any. Even in the capital the poet and historian composed their works for a circle of a few thousand knights and senators, for the friends and families of their own few hundreds of acquaintances, whom they invited to encourage their efforts by attending their recitations. The paralysis which benumbed the energies of the Roman nobility at this crisis of terror and despair, extended naturally to the organs of their sentiments and opinions. Not history only and philosophy suffered an eclipse, Its effect upon literature. but poetry also, which under Augustus had been the true expression of the national feelings, became mute

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 1.: "Tiberii Calique, et Claudii, ac Neronis res, florentibus ipsis ob metum falsæ, postquam occiderant *recentibus odiis compositæ sunt.*" There seems reason to believe that the hostility to Tiberius's memory increased rather than diminished in the course of the succeeding century.



when the feelings themselves could no longer be trusted with utterance. We have seen how Cremutius was subjected to persecution for pronouncing that Brutus and Cassius were the last of the Romans. A tragedian was accused, and if accused we may presume perhaps that he was condemned, for speaking evil of the king of men, Agamemnon; and various authors were assailed, and their writings sentenced to proscription, to whose recitations the last princeps had himself listened with indulgence.<sup>1</sup> The poems which were tolerated were generally the most trifling and perhaps licentious in character.<sup>2</sup> The sly irony of the fable, a style of composition adopted by slaves, and imitated from the servile Orientals, seems not unsuitable to these perilous times.<sup>3</sup> The name of Phædrus belongs in all probability to the Tiberian period, but it is curious that no later writer for four centuries should have cared to notice him.<sup>4</sup> Similar or worse has been the fate of a more serious writer, Manilius, the author of an elaborate poem on Astronomy and its spurious sister Astrology, a theme of some danger under the circumstances of the times, but which he has treated with irreproachable discretion; it is owing perhaps to the disgrace under which the forbidden science fell that this innocent work lapsed into entire obliv-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 61. It will be remembered by scholars that Atrides is the invidious nickname often applied by the poets to the Roman tyrants. Comp. Juvenal, iv. 65.: "Itur ad Atridem."

<sup>2</sup> Such seems to have been the character of the verses of Lentulus Gætulicus. Martial, *pref.* 1.; Plin. *Ep.* v. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Phædrus says of his own style of composition (*Prol. ad. iii.* 33):

"Nunc fabularum cur sit inventum genus  
Brevi docebo. Servitus obnoxia,  
Quia quæ volebat non audebat dicere,  
Affectus proprios in fabellas transtulit."

<sup>4</sup> Phædrus is supposed to have been a freedman of Tiberius. Seneca exhorts Polybius, a freedman of Claudius, to divert his mind by writing fables a few years later: but even then he calls this kind of composition, "Intentatum Romanis ingenii opus." Senec. *Consol. ad Polyb.* 27. Martial (*iii.* 20.) alludes to a Phædrus, but not apparently as a fabulist. "An æmulatur improbi jocos Phædri?"

ion, and has escaped the mention of any writer of antiquity.<sup>1</sup>

The deep gloom which settled on the face of higher society at Rome was heightened by its contrast with the frivolous dissipation of the populace, who though deprived of the glitter of a brilliant court, and surrounded by signs of mourning and humiliation

No traces of it among the populace.

among their natural leaders, not the less abandoned themselves to the sensual enjoyments which alone they relished, and rejoiced in their utter indifference to political principles, to parties and to men. They clamoured with exultation over the body of the traitor; nevertheless, *had the goddess Nursia*, says the moralist, *but favoured her Etruscan votary, had but the false intriguer circumvented the guileless old man, on the instant they would have been heard proclaiming Sejanus a Caesar and an Augustus.*<sup>2</sup> In the one class was abandonment of public life, shame, despair and suicide;—the intolerable evils of the time drove men not to religious consolations, but to a restless inquiry into the future, or a vain attempt to lull the sense of the present in philosophic apathy:—the other rushed headlong, hour by hour, to the baths, shows, and largesses, or shouted at the heels of the idol of the moment, or sighed and perhaps murmured at his loss, and speedily resigned itself to oblivion of the fitful emotion of the day.

We must be careful notwithstanding to observe that both the shame and the degradation were for the most part confined to the city and its vicinity, which lay in the very shadow of the despot. Tiberius was content to sacrifice Rome to the exigencies of his

General state of peace and security in the provinces.

<sup>1</sup> In this total absence of the "testimonia veterum," the date of Manilius is ascertained from his allusions to the death of Varus (i. 897.), to Augustus as still living (i. 922), and again to the island of Rhodes as the "hospitium recturi Principis orbem." iv. 764.

<sup>2</sup> Juvenal, x. 74.: "Idem populus, si Nursia Tusco

Favisset, ai oppressa foret secreta senectus  
Principis, hac ipsa Sejanum diceret hora  
Augustum."

position ; but he ruled the provinces on the whole in a Roman spirit, and maintained the dignity of the empire for the most part intact from the centre to the frontiers. The stability of the system, if decaying at the heart, might still be measured by the strength and solidity of its members. At no period did the bulwarks of the Roman power appear more secure and unassailable. The efforts of Drusus and his son to overpower the Germans on their own soil had been stupendous ; they had wielded forces equal at least to those with which Cæsar had added Gaul to the empire, and yet had not permanently advanced to the eagles in any direction. But, on the other hand, it was soon found that the Germans were only formidable under the pressure of an attack. When the assault relaxed, the power they had concentrated in resistance crumbled readily away. With the death of Arminius all combined hostility to Rome ceased among them. They never dared to retort in concert the invasions under which they had suffered. Meanwhile the arts and manners of the South advanced incessantly among them ; their political dissensions were fostered by the enemy, and in the weakness caused by mutual jealousy they turned with awe and wonder to the image of the immense and undivided empire, the skirt of whose robe trailed majestically on their borders. At the same time the long respite from military exactions allowed the pursuits of ease and luxury to fructify within the limits of the provinces. Gaul was no longer drained from year to year by the forced requisitions of men and horses, of arms and stores, which had fed the exhausting campaigns of Germanicus. Her ancient cities decked themselves with splendid edifices, with schools and theatres, aqueducts and temples. The camps on the Rhine and Danube were gradually transformed into commercial stations, and became emporiums of traffic with the north of Europe, where the fur and amber of the Hercynian forests and the Baltic coast were exchanged for wine and oil or gold and silver, those instruments of luxury which nature was supposed, in mercy or in anger, to have

denied to the German barbarians.<sup>1</sup> Such a state of affairs allowed the emperor to persist in his favourite plan of leaving the provincial governors for years unchanged at their posts. Each succeeding proconsul was no longer in a fever of haste to aggrandise himself by the plunder or renown of a foray beyond the frontiers. The administration of the provinces became a matter of ordinary routine; it lost its principal charms in the eyes of the senators, who could at last with difficulty be induced to exchange the brilliant pleasures of the capital, with all its mortifications and perils, for the dull honours of a distant prefecture. Nothing is more significant of the actual improvement in the condition of the subject than this fact, which is advanced by Tacitus as a proof of the decay of public spirit and the degeneracy of the age.<sup>2</sup>

Nor can I discover in general the justice of accusing Tiberius of neglecting the safety of his remote possessions, which seem, on the contrary, to have flourished securely in the armed peace of his august empire.<sup>3</sup> In Gaul the revolt of Sacrovir and his Belgian confederates was effectually suppressed: the outbreak of the Frisians seems, though at some cost of blood, to have been speedily quelled.<sup>4</sup> Nor have we any distinct confirmation of the assertion of Suetonius, that Tiberius suffered the province to be ravaged with impunity by the Germans, which, if true, can apply

Vigilance of  
Tiberius in  
guarding the  
frontiers.

Gaul and Ger-  
many.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Germ.* 5.: "Argentum et aurum propitii an irati Di negaverint dubito." This well-known assertion, so remarkably inaccurate, as it has proved, in fact, was provoked perhaps by the failure of the first speculation in Nassau mines. See Tac. *Ann.* xi. 20.: "Curtius Rufus . . . in agro Mattiaco recluserat specus quarrendis venis argenti; unde tenuis fructus, nec in longum fuit."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 27.: "Egregium quemque et regendis exercitiis idoneum, abnuere id munus." The distrust, however, or indifference of Tiberius was more distinctly shown in his keeping some of his governors at home for years after nominally appointing them. Such were the cases of Ælius Lamia and Arantius. Tac. l. c.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 41.: "Armeniam a Parthis occupari, Mesiam a Dacis Sarmatæque, Gallias a Germanis vastari neglexit."

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 72.

only to some transient violation of the frontiers. That disgrace indeed to this extent actually attended the Roman government seems not improbable, from circumstances which have transpired regarding the conduct of the commander in those parts. For many years the legions of the Upper Rhine were confided to a senator of high consideration; but he was said to have gained the devotion of both his own soldiers and those of the lower province, by the popularity of his manners and the laxity of his discipline.<sup>1</sup> Such conduct proceeded, we may confidently affirm, either from culpable negligence or from criminal aspirations. Tiberius was doubtless alarmed. Lentulus Gætulicus, such was the officer's name, was denounced by a delator; but his marriage with the daughter of Sejanus seemed a surer ground of attack than a charge of incapacity or treason. Tiberius pretended to listen to an accusation thus artfully framed, the senators were blinded, and Gætulicus was threatened with removal and disgrace. Undismayed, he addressed from his camp a letter to the emperor, urging that he had not sought connexion with the minister of any motion of his own, but at the suggestion of Tiberius himself; that if he had been deceived by the arts of the traitor, his fault was only the same as his master's: it was unjust that he should suffer for an error which had been in fact common to both. His loyalty, he protested, was unshaken, and so it would remain as long as he was himself trusted; but the arrival of a successor to his command he should regard as no other than a sentence of death, and to such he would refuse to bow. The emperor, he boldly added, might continue to rule the state, but he would retain the government of his own province. The rumour of so proud a defiance struck the citizens with astonishment; but Gætulicus kept his place, and the impunity which was thus accorded to a son-in-law of Sejanus engaged them to believe it. Tiberius, they whispered, knew well how deep was the general dissatisfaction with his rule; he

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 30.: "Effusæ clementiæ, modicus severitatæ."

was conscious also of the infirmities of age, and aware that his authority rested after all on opinion rather than on its own intrinsic force. He refrained from risking a collision.<sup>1</sup>

Nor does the assertion of Tiberius's indifference seem to be better founded with regard to Mœsia. Tacitus steps frequently aside from his domestic narrative to re-  
Mœsia.
cord the affairs of this region and the exploits of

the emperor's lieutenants; while Appian makes special mention of the conquest of Mœsia under Tiberius, and of the establishment of provincial government in this quarter by his hand.<sup>2</sup> Sabinus, Pandus, and Labeo seem to have held the command there successively during the first half of this principate, and these men at least were not allowed to indulge in indolence, for their exertions and victories are a theme to which the historian repeatedly refers. At a later period, indeed, we shall read of an incursion of the Roxolani, a people of Sarmatia, during a season of commotion at Rome, and this is not improbably the occurrence which Suetonius had actually in view.<sup>3</sup> Mœsia, in the reign of the second princeps, was one of the best appointed of the imperial provinces. Two legions were quartered in it, and a military road from the borders of Pannonia led along the bank of the Danube to the Euxine at Tomi, thus securing the communications of the presidiary cohorts through the whole length of the only exposed frontier. The north-eastern corner of the province, for the Romans did not care to occupy the pestilential marshes of the Dobrudscha, was also connected by a coast-road with Byzantium on the Thracian Bosphorus.<sup>4</sup>

But the emptiness of these charges can be more clearly shown in the case of the dependent kingdom of Armenia,

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Reputante Tiberio publicum sibi odium, extremam ætatem, magisque fama quam vi stare res suas." We shall see reason at a later period to believe that the command of Gætulicus was really fraught with danger to the imperial interests.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 66., iv. 5.; Appian, *Illyrica*, 30.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 76.—A. U. 828. A. D. 70. Comp. Suet. l. c.

<sup>4</sup> Bergier, *Grands Chemins*, p. 509.

Armenia.

which, according to the same authority, Tiberius suffered to be seized by the Parthians, and wrested from the patronage of the empire. It appears, on the contrary, from the particular recital of Tacitus, that the bold occupation of this kingdom by Artabanus was immediately resented by the emperor with the energy of a younger man. Not only were the wild mountaineers of the Caucasus, the Iberians and Albanians, invited to descend upon the intruders; not only were the sons of Phraates released from their long detention at Rome, and directed to present themselves on their native soil, and claim the allegiance of their father's subjects; but a Roman general, L. Vitellius, a man of distinguished valour and experience, was deputed to lead the forces of Asia and Syria against the enemy; and while it was hoped that a vigorous demonstration would suffice to hurl him back from the territory in dispute, instructions were not withheld, it would appear, to push on if necessary, and smite the Parthians with the strong hand of the empire. But these combinations proved speedily successful. Artabanus, already detested by many of his most powerful subjects, was compelled to descend from his throne, and take refuge in the far wilds of Hyrcania; while Tiridates, the son of Phraates, was accepted in his room. The army, which had crossed the Euphrates, returned victorious without striking a blow, though, by a subsequent revolution, Artabanus was not long afterwards restored, and admitted, upon giving the required hostages, to the friendship of his lordly rivals.<sup>1</sup>

If Tiberius refrained from enlarging his empire by fresh conquests, he was not the less intent on consolidating the unwieldy mass by the gradual incorporation of the dependent kingdoms inclosed within its limits. The contests between two rival brothers, Cotys and Rhaseuporis, in Thrace, gave him a pretext for placing the fairest part of that country under the control of a Roman officer, thus preparing the way for its ultimate annexation.<sup>2</sup>

Thrace, Cappadocia, and Syria.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 31-37.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 67.

On the death of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia in 770, his country was declared a Roman province, and subjected to the rule of an imperial procurator.<sup>1</sup> At the same period the frontier kingdom of Commagène was placed under the government of a proprætor.<sup>2</sup> Syria, the great stronghold of the Roman power in the East, was still skirted by several tributary kingdoms or ethnarchies, such as Chalcis, Emesa, Damascus, and Abilene; but the dependency of Judea, the wealthiest and proudest of all these vassal states, had been wrested under Augustus from the dynasty to which it had been entrusted, and was still subjected by his successor to the control of the proconsul at Antioch.

Herod the Great, on his death-bed, had sent his seal, together with an ample present, to Augustus, in token of the entire dependence upon Rome in which he held his dominions. This act of vassalage procured him, perhaps, the ratification of the disposition he had made of his territories between Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philippus. To the first was allotted the kingdom of Judea, including Samaria and Idumea, but with the loss of the cities of Gaza, Gadara, and Hippo, which were now annexed to the government of Syria. To the second fell the districts of Galilæa to the west, and Peræa to the east of the Jordan; while the Trachenitis, Auranitis, and Gaulonitis formed with Ituræa the tetrarchy of Philip, extending northward to the borders of Damascus.<sup>3</sup> But the rival kinsmen were not satisfied with this division. Archelaus and Antipas repaired to Rome to plead against one another; but while they were urging their suits before the tribunal of the senate, the provisional government which the Romans had established in Judea was suddenly attacked on all sides by bodies of armed insurgents. Their leaders, however, were not men of rank or commanding influence, and the revolt was in no sense a national movement. It was

Division of  
Palestine be-  
tween the sons  
of Herod the  
Great.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 42.; Dion, lvi. 17.; Suet. 75. 28.; Strabo, xii. p. 534.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 56.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph. *Antiq.* xvii. 11. § 4.



speedily crushed by Varus, then proconsul of Syria, the same who ten years afterwards perished so miserably in Germany, and punished with the atrocious severity too commonly employed in such cases.<sup>1</sup> Archelaus, confirmed in his sovereignty, continued to reign in these lamentable auspices in

Disgrace and  
banishment of  
Archelaus.

Judea. His subjects, still mindful of the sons of their beloved Mariamne, never regarded him with favour; and it has been mentioned how they complained to Augustus of his tyranny, and obtained his removal from the throne. He was finally sent into exile at Vienna in Gaul.

The fall of Archelaus left the throne of Judea and Samaria without a direct claimant, and the emperor took the opportunity of attaching them to the Roman dominions.<sup>2</sup> This acquisition was placed under the general administration of the proconsul of Syria, but governed more directly by an imperial procurator, who took up his abode at Cæsarea Philippi. Of the character of the new government we find no complaints even in the Jewish writers whose accounts of this period have been preserved to us. Both Augustus and his successor appear to have instructed their officers to continue to respect the peculiar habits and prejudices of the Jews: 'whatever may have been the ordinary severities of Roman domination, it was not till the arrival of Pontius Pilatus, about the middle of the reign of Tiberius, that any special grievance was inflicted upon them. They complained that the new procurator commenced his career with a grave and wanton insult. He entered Jerusalem with standards flying, upon which, according to the usage of the time, the image of the emperor was displayed. The old religious feeling of the Jews against the representation of the human figure was roused to indignation: they remonstrated with the

Government of  
Pontius Pilate.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* ii. 5.; *Antiq.* xvii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Fischer (*Ram. Zeit.* a 759.) fixes the annexation of the provinces to the east half of this year. Comp. Dion. l. 27.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 2. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Philo, *legat. ad Cai.* 37.

procurator, nor would they listen to his excuse that the Romans had their customs as well as the Jews, and that the removal of the emperor's portrait from his ensigns by an officer of his own might be regarded as a crime against his majesty. But if Tiberius was merely the creature of the delators in his own capital, in the provinces he retained his good sense and independence. Perhaps it was by a special authorization from him that Pilate consented to withdraw the obnoxious images.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the Jews, under the guidance of their priests, continued to watch every act of his administration with inveterate jealousy, and when he ventured to apply a portion of the temple revenues to the construction of an aqueduct for the supply of their city, broke out into violence which provoked him to severe measures of repression. Mutual exasperation led probably to further riots, followed by sanguinary punishments: the government of Pilate was charged with cruelty and exaction, and at last the provincials addressed themselves to Vitellius, the governor of Syria.<sup>2</sup> Nor were their expectations disappointed. The proconsul required his procurator to quit the province, and submit himself to the pleasure of the offended emperor. Tiberius, indeed, was already dead before his arrival, but the new ruler attended without delay to his lieutenant's representations, and Pilate was dismissed with ignominy to Vienna.<sup>3</sup> From the confidence with which Tiberius was appealed to on a matter of such remote concern, it would seem that the vigilance of his control was not generally relaxed even in the last moments of his life.

Recall and banishment of Pilate.

While Judea and Samaria were thus annexed to the Roman province, Galilee, and the outlying regions of Perea and Ituræa, were still suffered to remain under their native rulers; and the dominions of the great Herod became, as we shall see, once more

Condition of Judea under the Roman government.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 4. 1.; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 9. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 5. 2.: καὶ Πιλάτος, ὅσα ἔτεσσιν διατρέψας ἐπὶ Ἰουδαίους, εἰς Ῥώμην ἡγεύσας, ταῖς Ὀυτιέλλου ἐντολαῖς, οὐκ ὄν ἀντιπεῖν.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph. l. c.; Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 7.

united transiently under a single sceptre at no distant period. If, however, we consider the condition of the Jewish provincials under the Roman fasces, we shall find reason to believe that it was far from intolerable, and presented probably a change for the better from the tyranny of their own regal dynasties. Doubtless the national feeling, as far as it extended, was outraged in its cherished prepossessions by the substitution of a foreign for a native domination. The nobles and the priests, who preserved and reflected this sentiment, and who suffered in consideration under foreign sway, fostered the prejudices of the people to the utmost, excited their discontent, fanned the flame of sedition, and then betrayed their clients to the sword of relentless executioners. It may be admitted that the fiscal exactions of the procurator were more uniformly rigid than those of Herod, whose remission of a large portion of his people's taxes had gained him favour in the midst of his atrocities. Yet the amount of freedom and security enjoyed by the Jews under a Quirinius and a Pilate shows the general leniency of the Roman government at this period. The warm descriptions of provincial felicity by the Jewish authority Philo, which will be cited hereafter, may be coloured to suit a purpose, and it may be impossible to produce any distinct facts to support this general conjecture. Yet indications are not wanting in the writings of the Evangelists, which contain, abstracted from their religious significance, the most interesting record in existence of the social condition of antiquity,—for they alone of all our ancient documents are the productions of men of the people,—to show that the mass of the population of Judea was contented and comparatively happy under the rule of the Roman procurator.<sup>1</sup> Such is the impression I receive from the representations of common life in the Scriptures of the New Testament. The instances they allege of cruelty and injustice are drawn from the conduct of the Jews towards one another, rather

<sup>1</sup> These writings refer in point of time to the middle of the reign of Tiberius. The dates variously assigned for the Crucifixion range from A. D. 27 to A. D. 33. Clinton fixes it at A. D. 29, A. U. 782, the sixteenth year of Tiberius.

than of the foreigner towards the native. The Scribe and the Pharisee are held up to odium or contempt, not the minister of police or the instrument of government. The Romans are regarded in them as the protectors of the people against their domestic tyrants. The duty of paying them tribute is urged as the proper price of the tranquillity they maintain; their fiscal officers are spoken of with forbearance; their soldiers are cited as examples of thoughtful toleration; the vice of the provincial ruler is indifference and unbelief rather than wanton violence; and the tribunal of the emperor himself is appealed to as the last resort of injured innocence. The freedom of movement enjoyed by the subjects of Rome, the permission so fully allowed them of passing from town to town, from frontier to frontier, of assembling together for social and religious objects, of flocking in crowds into the city or the wilderness, at the call of popular leaders or preachers, all indicate a state of personal liberty which might be envied throughout the continent of Europe at the present day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It may be said perhaps that this indulgence was owing to the want of means of repression rather than of the desire to repress. The imperfections of the police of the empire, from the slenderness of its military force, were compensated by the severity of its punishments.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

THE FAMILY OF HEROD THE GREAT AT ROME.—HERENICE, AND HER CHILDREN HERODIAS AND AGRIPPA.—HERODIAS REPUDIATES HER HUSBAND PHILIPPUS, MARRIES HEROD ANTIPAS, AND RECEIVES A PRINCIPALITY IN PALESTINE.—AGRIPPA COURTS THE YOUNG CAIUS, AND IMBUES HIM WITH THE IDEAS OF ORIENTAL SOVEREIGNTY.—FALLS UNDER DISPLEASURE OF TIBERIUS, AND IS ARRESTED.—ON THE DEATH OF TIBERIUS HE IS RELEASED, AND TAKEN INTO FAVOUR BY CAIUS.—FIRST COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEW PRINCIPATE.—LIBERALITY OF CAIUS.—HIS SUBSERVIENCE TO THE SENATE.—ATTEMPTS TO RESTORE THE COMITIA.—BECOMES CONSUL, JULY, 790.—HIS INDUSTRY IN ADMINISTRATION.—MAGNIFICENCE OF HIS SHOWS.—HE FALLS INTO EXCESSIVE DISSIPATION.—HIS DANGEROUS ILLNESS.—DESPAIR OF THE CITIZENS AND PROVINCIALS.—ON HIS RECOVERY HIS HEAD TURNED BY FLATTERY.—PUTS TO DEATH THE YOUNG TIBERIUS, MACRO AND ENNIA, AND SILANUS.—HIS EXTRAVAGANCES, NECESSITIES, AND CRUELTY.—BELIEVES HIMSELF A GOD, AND REQUIRES HIS SUBJECTS TO WORSHIP HIM.—INDIFFERENCE OF THE ROMANS AND GREEKS.—RESISTANCE OF THE JEWS.—DISTURBANCES AT ALEXANDRIA.—AGRIPPA GOES TO PALESTINE: INTRIGUES AGAINST ANTIPAS AND HERODIAS: OBTAINS THEIR BANISHMENT, AND SUCCEEDS TO THEIR DOMINIONS.—CAIUS ORDERS HIS STATUE TO BE SET UP IN THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUES, AND IN THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM.—MISSION OF PHILO THE JEW, AND INTERVIEW WITH THE EMPEROR. (A. D. 37-40. A. U. 790-798.)

THE son of Philip, king of Macedon, could find among the free citizens of the Grecian republics no youth of equal rank to compete with him in the games of Olympia, and the heir of an Augustus or Tiberius might already disdain the companionship of the children of Roman knights and senators. But the capital of the world was now frequented by the scions of many royal families. The children of dependent sovereigns, invited to receive a Roman education, were retained there as pledges for their parents' fidelity; the pretenders to disputed thrones

Royal children  
educated at  
Rome.

were encouraged to lay their claims before the emperor in person, and allowed to wait year after year for his final determination. A distinguished society of royal birth was thus collected together in the centre of republican equality, objects of remark and interest to those around them, to whom they communicated the ideas in which they had themselves been bred quite as fast as they imbibed the notions of their conquerors.

The awe with which these illustrious strangers might at first regard the institutions of their mighty mistress would naturally abate upon closer acquaintance with them. They found the Romans profoundly dissatisfied with the noble polity of their ancestors, discarding one by one the guarantees of their ancient freedom, and abandoning themselves to an ignorant admiration of the hollow splendour of Oriental despotism. What remained of the equal laws to which the vital forces of the conquering republic had been ascribed, appeared to their closer examination a mere shadow and pretence. Unable to appreciate the real energy which still moved under these antiquated forms, and the influence his old traditions still practically exerted upon the Roman citizen, they learnt to look with complacent disdain upon the names of the senate and people. The Roman nobles, on the other hand, notwithstanding the public and official contumely with which they treated the most illustrious of their subjects, did not fail to admire in their hearts, with a blind reverence, the social prescriptions of eastern civilization, and were not slow to acquire, under the tuition of these gallant kings and princes, a glowing interest in the forms of Oriental monarchy.<sup>1</sup>

In this circle of distinguished foreigners the dynasties of Thrace and Cappadocia, of Egypt, Syria and Armenia, were all represented. But none among them were at this time so conspicuous as the members of the family of Herod the Judean, some of whom were

Herod Agrippa  
educated at  
Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Hor. *Sat.* i. 3. 12.: "Modo reges atque tetrarchas, Omnia magna loquens."

domiciled for many years at Rome, and admitted to the most intimate acquaintance with the princes of the Cæsarean house. The imperial city was in fact at this period the common asylum of many unfortunate princes who would in their own country have been exposed to certain destruction from the horrid precautions of dynastic jealousy. I have not paused to enumerate precisely the members of his own family whom the tyrant of Judea had successively put to death. For many years his own children had been screened from his fury by the shadow of the imperial palace: when at last they had been restored, at his instance, to their native soil, they had been led speedily to the scaffold before the eyes of their indignant countrymen. But Augustus had again interfered to save the monster's grandchildren. Herodes, the son of Aristobulus, to whom the name of Agrippa had been given in compliment to the emperor's friend and minister, had been removed to Rome soon after his father's

His mother  
Berenice and  
sister Herodias.

death, and with him his mother Berenice, and his elder sister Herodias.<sup>1</sup> These children united the blood of the rivals Salome and Mariamne: their nearest kinsmen had perished by the hands of the executioner, and the dominions which should have descended to their father Aristobulus and his brother Alexander had been divided among their uncles, the offspring of their grandfather's later marriages. At Rome, however, they had been received with kindness. Antonia, the daughter of the triumvir, might remember the intimacy which had subsisted between her father and Herod, and she introduced the grandchildren of the king of Judea to the society of her own offspring by Drusus.<sup>2</sup> Herod Agrippa, born in the year 743, was but one year older than Claudius, the youngest of her children, with whom he was bred up in the closest intimacy.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 6. 3.: τὸν Ἀγρίππαν . . . θαύματος ἀξιώτατον γεγενημένον, ὃς ἐκ πάντων ἰδιώτου, καὶ παρὰ πᾶσαν δόξαν τῶν εἰδότεων αὐτὸν, ἐπὶ τοσούτῳ ἡγεῖσθαι δυνάμεως. xviii. 7. 1.: Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως ὀλίγον πρὸ τῆς τελευτῆς Ἀγρίππας ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ διατρέμενος.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 1.

Both Herod and his sister inherited the ambitious spirit of their house. Upon the disgrace of Archelaus, and the vacancy of the throne of Judea, they might hope, through their interest with the rulers of the empire, to recover that portion of their ancestral inheritance. Notwithstanding, however, their intrigues and aspirations, the imperial government still retained its new acquisition, and showed no disposition to relinquish it. All their views were now covertly directed to saving some inferior province or principality from the wreck of their grandsire's sovereignty. But the schemes of the sister were thwarted by the indolence of her husband Philippus, while the golden hopes still cherished by the brother could only be revealed in the royal magnificence he displayed in a private station. The liberality with which he courted the chiefs of Rome, and led the career of prodigality among them, soon exhausted his resources and plunged him into desperate embarrassments. Nor could he retrieve his affairs by flattery of the emperor, for Tiberius, after the death of Drusus, refused to see any of the young prince's companions, whose presence would have renewed his sorrow.

Philippus, the despised husband of Herodias, was a son of Herod the Great by a second Mariamne, who had easily resigned himself to the obscure privacy which, on account, perhaps, of his acknowledged imbecility of character, had been assigned him on the division of his father's fortunes. The union of an uncle and a niece was abhorrent to Roman notions, and these, we may suppose, were still more offended when Herodias, impatient at the restraint imposed upon her by a consort she disdained, and solicited at the same time in marriage by another uncle, Antipas, presumed to repudiate Philippus by her own act, and unite herself with his half-brother.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the favour of the imperial family now smoothed the way before her. She returned with her new husband to Samaria, the province which had been erected into a sovereignty in his

Agrippa attaches himself to Calus Caesar.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 6. 4.: ἐπι συγχύσει φρονήσασα τῶν πατέρων.



favour, and obtained a subordinate appointment for her brother as governor of the city of Tiberias. But Agrippa did not long remain satisfied with this inferior position. The compassion of friends and kinsmen furnished him with funds for recommencing his career of politic extravagance at Rome, to which spot in the decline of the reigning emperor, he once more betook himself.<sup>1</sup> He threw himself with renewed fervour into the pleasures and dissipations of his imperial patrons, drew off gradually from his early associate, the stupid and neglected Claudius, in whose prospects there was little to encourage him, and having to choose for an ally between the grandson and the grand-nephew of Tiberius, shrewdly attached himself to the latter.<sup>2</sup> Agrippa was twice the age of the stripling Caius: intelligent and active, and well versed in men and affairs, he soon acquired unbounded ascendancy over the young prince, now trembling in the uncertainty of his own fortunes, and oscillating between the brightest hopes of power and the direst apprehensions. To Caius such a friend and mentor as the Jewish chief was invaluable. With Agrippa he passed the hours he could steal from the exacting jealousy of his uncle; from him he learnt the customs of the East and the simple machinery of Asiatic despotism, and imbibed a contemptuous disgust at the empty forms of the Republic, which served only, as he might in his blind inexperience imagine, to impede the march of government, while they contributed nothing to its security. He saw the loathed and abject Tiberius cowering in terror before a senate more abject in its terrors than himself, hiding his person from the sight of his subjects, feeling his way before every step, and effecting every end by intrigue and circumvention; while the petty lord of a Syrian plain or watercourse was every inch a king; while in the little town of Samaria, as he

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 3.: ὤχετο ἐκ 'Αλεξανδρείας πλέων εἰς τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου δέεται τοῦ Ἀλαβάρχου μυριάδας εἰκοσι δάνεια αὐτῷ δούναι. In this and other enterprises Agrippa was assisted by the good services of his wife Cyprus, the daughter of Phasaël, a brother of Herod the Great.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 4.

heard, every word of the tetrarch was obeyed without remonstrance or hesitation.

But it was not in the simplicity of their despotic authority only that the sovereigns of the East so far transcended, he was assured, the princes and imperators of the rival hemisphere. Their wealth was more abundant, for all the possessions of their subjects were held only in dependence upon them; their splendour was more dazzling, for thirty generations of autocrats had striven to excel one another in the arts of magnificence and display. The capitals of the Oriental monarchs far exceeded in beauty and convenience the mass of dark and smoky cabins, in which the conquerors of the world were still doomed to burrow. But of all the cities of the East none equalled Jerusalem in splendour.<sup>1</sup> The great Herod had adorned it with buildings, the magnificence of which outshone anything that could yet be seen at Rome. His theatres and gymnasiums, his forums and colonnades, were of the costliest materials and the noblest proportions. The precincts of the temple, which he rebuilt upon the holiest of Jewish sites, and enlarged with an outer court of much greater dimensions, might have contained all the fanes of Rome together. For fifty years marble had been piled upon marble in constructing it.<sup>2</sup> It occupied the whole summit of the hill of Moriah, next to Zion the most prominent quarter of the city, and rising upon enormous substructions from the deep valleys beneath, seemed like one immense citadel, the Capitol of the Jewish nation.<sup>3</sup> On the rival summit of

He inflames his imagination with the description of the splendour of Jerusalem,

<sup>1</sup> Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* v. 14.) calls Jerusalem, "longe clarissima urbium Orientis, non Judææ modo;" referring, it may be supposed, to its external splendour rather than to its historic fame. Although this writer may be suspected of a wish to flatter his patrons Vespasian and Titus, its conquerors, his glowing language is sufficiently borne out by Josephus, Strabo, and Tacitus.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus dates the commencement of the third temple from the eighteenth year of Herod's reign, A. U. 784, B. C. 20, and it was not yet fully completed. *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* xv. 11. 1., xi. 9. 7..

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, xvi. 2. p. 768.; Tac. *Hist.* v. 12.: "Templum in modum arcis." *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* v. 5., vi. 6.

Mount Zion, the highest elevation in Jerusalem, was planted the royal residence; no modest mansion for the most eminent of Roman senators, but a palace worthy of the name, an abode befitting an Oriental potentate, erected not by the contributions of the populace, but by confiscation of the estates of the great and powerful of the land. Surrounded with lofty walls and towers, springing, like the temple, from the depths of the gorges beneath, containing vast halls and ample corridors, its courts filled with trees and grass-plots, with reservoirs, fountains, and running streams, it was a palace, a villa, and a fortress all in one.<sup>1</sup> Zion and Moriah faced each other across the deep and narrow trench of the Tyropœon, and the temple and palace were connected by a bridge or causeway, across which the sovereign marched above the heads of his subjects, as the sun passes in the heavens from cloud to cloud. If the kings of Judea had abstained as yet from claiming the title of divinity, from regard to the fantastic scruples of their people, such at least was the honour to which the Eastern potentates might generally pretend, and such, should he ever be restored to authority in his native land, Agrippa himself already meditated to assume.

and the magnificence of its sovereigns.

The slaves of Asia acknowledged their sovereigns as the sole fountains of life and property; they regarded them as above the law or beside the law; no privileged ranks and classes of men, no traditions and prescriptions of accustomed usage, stood between them and their arbitrary caprices; uncles and nieces, brothers and sisters, sons and mothers might marry at their will:<sup>2</sup> to the multitude they held in fact the place of Gods upon earth; to deny them the title might seem mere senseless prudery.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* v. 4. 4.

<sup>2</sup> The steadfast abhorrence of the Romans for these irregularities is one of the finest traits in their character Comp. Lucan, *Phars.* viii. 397.:

"Num barbara nobis  
Est ignota Venus? . . . Epulis vesana meroque  
Regia non ulios exceptos legibus horret  
Concubitus . . . ."

Such was the sovereignty of which Agrippa talked, and such, when the associates conversed together on the future succession to the principate of Tiberius, was the sovereignty to which the young aspirant was encouraged to look. We shall trace throughout the brief career of Caius, the first despot or sovereign prince of Rome, the influence of the ideas which his friend thus opened to him. We are arrived at a period when the personal character of their ruler has come to exercise a decisive influence on the sentiments no less than on the welfare of the Roman people, and through them of the world at large. It becomes the more important therefore to note the conditions under which that character was formed. Since the overthrow of the renegade Antonius, Rome had enjoyed a respite from the invasion of Asiatic principles and notions. Augustus had set up bulwarks against them which Tiberius had not failed to respect: it remained for the puerile selfishness of Caius, under tuition of the wily foreigner, to introduce into the city an element of disunion more fatal to her polity and manners than the arms of a triumvir or the edicts of an emperor. The prostitution of personal dignity by self-display in the theatre and circus; the assumption of the divine character, to the utter destruction of all remaining sense of religion; excessive extravagance in shows and buildings; indulgence of self and indulgence of the populace, together with savage oppression of the nobler classes; unstinted gratification of brutal ferocity;—all these are attributes of Oriental sovereignty, which Caius was first of the Roman emperors to exercise, but in which some of his successors rioted, if possible, even more furiously than himself.

*Influence of  
these Oriental  
ideas.*

Caius, now in the middle of his twenty-fifth year, was by nature more impressible than was usual with his hard and prosaic countrymen.<sup>1</sup> The poetical and rhetorical exercises to which he had been directed, without the compensating influence of severer train-

*Caius unsound  
both in mind  
and body.*

<sup>1</sup> Dion notes that Caius at the moment of Tiberius's death wanted five months and four days to complete his twenty-fifth year. lxx. 6.

ing, which had been unkindly withheld from him, had imparted perhaps a certain flaccidity to his character, confirmed by the enervating voluptuousness in which he had been steeped from his cradle. His constitution was weakly. In childhood he had been subject to fits, and though he outgrew this tendency, and learnt to bear fatigue of body, he was not unfrequently seized with sudden faintings. Early indulgence in every caprice, and premature dissipation, had strained his nerves and brain, till at last a temperament naturally excitable, and harassed by constant fever, seemed always to tremble on the verge of delirium. It was said of him, at least in his later years, that he never slept for more than three hours together. Through the weary darkness of the night he would toss in restless agitation on his bed, or pace with hurried and unequal strides the long resounding corridors, shouting impatiently for the dawn. His dreams were wild and terrible, and in his waking visions his mind seemed ever on the stretch with the vastness of its shadowy images, in which he fancied he beheld the great Spirit of the Ocean, and engaged in converse with him. The might and majesty of the Cæsarean empire, as of a Titan that defied the Gods, inflamed his perturbed imagination, his conceptions expanded like the welling visions of a dream, and his grasp of power was a fitful struggle to realize a sick man's nightmare.<sup>1</sup>

While the germs of this unhappy temperament, so pitiable in a private man, so fearful in a ruler, were still undeveloped in his youthful frame, deep must have been the charm to Caius of his conversations with Agrippa, which revealed to him glimpses of a yet unknown world of splendour and enjoyment. But they were dangerous, as indeed every step, word, and look in his position was fraught with danger. It happened

Agrippa arrested by Tiberius, and released on the accession of Caius.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 50.: "Valetude ei neque corporis neque animi constitit. Puer comitali morbo vexatus, &c.: mentis valetudinem et ipse senserat . . . innotabatur insomnia maxime; neque enim plus quam tribus nocturnis horis quiescebat," &c.

that the friends were one day taking the air together in a carriage, when the Judean took occasion to express his hope that no long time would elapse before the realization of their cherished wishes; that the sceptre would soon drop from the grasp of the aged emperor, and be placed in the hands of his nephew. But the charioteer listened as he drove, and reported the conversation to Tiberius. Agrippa was suddenly arrested and placed in confinement, where he remained, unheard and untried, for the six months which intervened before the emperor's final illness. Caius trembled at this disgrace, the prelude, as he might anticipate, to his own, and redoubled the servile compliances with which he paid court to the tyrant. Antonia, whose influence was still in the ascendant, averted the danger from her grandson, and succeeded in softening in some degree the rigour of Agrippa's captivity.<sup>1</sup> Tiberius was getting visibly weaker. The ministers of the imperial tyranny were on the watch, and at every symptom of his end approaching made some relaxation in their treatment of the prisoners, who at his death might suddenly be restored to liberty and power. The friends of Agrippa were not, it seems, prevented from visiting him, and some there were who were not afraid of doing so. One day a freedman entered his chamber with an air of mystery, and whispered in his ear in the Jewish language, *the Lion is dead.*<sup>2</sup> It seems that the premature report of the emperor's death had reached him. The captive understood his meaning, and cried aloud with joy. When the centurion who guarded him was admitted to a knowledge of the secret, he urged his prisoner to take a seat at his own table, and celebrate with festivity the event from which they both anticipated his speedy deliverance. But suddenly the news arrived of the emperor's unlooked-for recovery. He had quitted his residence, it was added; he had summoned his attendants; he was already on his way to Rome. Dire was

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 10.: συντεβας προς αὐτὸν γλώσση τῇ Ἑβραίων, -ἰβνηκεν ὁ λέων, φησὶν.

the consternation in the prison, as at the same moment in the palace. The pleasant party was rudely broken up. Trembling for the consequences of his imprudence, the centurion sought to compensate by redoubled violence for the indulgence he had shown his prisoner. He loaded Agrippa with chains, and threatened him loudly with death. The confirmation of the first report came opportunely to restore his equanimity, and to allow Agrippa to profit by the order which soon arrived from Caius for his release.

But the alarm which had been excited by the premature announcement of the tyrant's decease was not universally allayed by this confirmation of the event. Too many still feared that it was only a device to discover the real sentiments of the people, and subject to a bloody punishment all who should venture to give utterance to the general satisfaction.

On the death of Tiberius, the people express their indignation against him.

Some condemned victims were awaiting in prison the expiration of the ten days' respite which the law allowed them; and it was believed, we are assured (such was the horror of the times), that when the death of Tiberius was announced, the gaolers, either refusing to credit it, or in default of authority for refraining, consigned those whose term had arrived, in spite of their cries and obtestations, to the hands of the executioner.<sup>1</sup> There is reason, indeed, to believe, that this atrocity, a parallel to which has actually occurred in modern times, was merely a popular invention: but the report served to exasperate still more the fury of the multitude, which, on the assurance that the lion was really dead, burst out into wild exclamations of disgust and hatred. *Tiberius to the Tiber*, they cried, and called, it is said, for the hook and ropes to drag the body to the Gemoniæ and to the river, that the goddess Earth and the spirits of the buried

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 75. This story, which is given as a popular rumour, is opposed to the express declaration of Dion (lvi. 27.), that, on the first occurrence of Tiberius's illness, the condemned were respited to await the event, and is not entitled to much credit. The parallel case alluded to is that of the last victims of Robespierre.

might not receive it into their holy keeping.<sup>1</sup> But this ebullition of feeling, if it has been truly represented to us, was not lasting: a calmer expression of popular disapprobation, which demanded that the remains should be hastily consumed at a distance, and not brought to Rome at all, was also speedily overruled; and it was left to the senate to decide, with the consent of the new chief of the state, how the body of the late emperor should be disposed of, and how his memory should be treated.<sup>2</sup>

If the populace of the city really entertained any vehement dislike of their late ruler, it was not for his cruelty, by which they had been little affected, but for the ungenial austerity of his government, at which they had long repined, and which they might expect to give way, under the sway of a gay and gallant youth, to an era of festivities and amusements. The senate, which had far more reason to hate the patron of Sejanus and the delators, comported itself at least with decent gravity. The announcement of the emperor's actual decease was brought to the fathers by Macro, in a letter from Caius. He was commissioned to present to them at the same time the testament of Tiberius: but while he desired in his new master's name that all the posthumous honours formerly assigned to Augustus, the public funeral, the confirmation of his acts, and the deification, should now be decreed to his successor, he declared that the dying man's disposition of his patrimony was the act of an incapable dotard, and required that it should be solemnly annulled. The legal validity of this instrument, as we have seen, could extend only to the

The will of Tiberius is annulled by the senate.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. l. c.: "Ut pars, Tiberium in Tiberim, clamitarent: pars Terram matrem, Deosque Manes orarent, ne mortuo sedem ullam, nisi inter impios, darent."

<sup>2</sup> The people demanded that the body should be consumed in the amphitheatre at Atella, the public place nighest at hand, instead of being brought to Rome; also that it should be *semiusulatum*, scorched and not burnt decently to ashes, as was usual with the cheap and hurried obsequies of slaves and criminals.



private property of the testator; but all felt how strong a claim it would constitute to a division of political sovereignty, and Macro might, perhaps, actually represent to the senators how incongruous it was to give a presumptive right to the empire to a stripling like the young Tiberius, who had not yet reached the age which entitled him even to a seat in their assembly.<sup>1</sup> The late emperor's wish to make his grandson and grand-nephew joint-heirs of all the property or power he might be able to bequeath was too generally known, perhaps, to admit of the suppression of his testament; but Macro was assured of the favour in which the child of Germanicus was held by the people, and he counted on certain means of overcoming whatever reluctance the fathers might have to cancel it.<sup>2</sup> The rush, indeed, of the populace into the Curia decided and hastened their resolution. The will was set aside; a public funeral was appointed; but the consideration of further honours for the deceased was postponed to a decree by which all the functions and dignities of empire were at once conferred upon Caius.<sup>3</sup>

Full of anxiety at the fortunes which were about to open upon him, the young emperor placed himself at the head of

<sup>1</sup> The idea that the two princes were left co-heirs of the empire was strongly impressed upon the minds of all our Greek authorities. See Dion, lix. 1.; Philo, *Leg. ad Cai.* 4. Josephus says that Tiberius recommended his grandson to Caius as his associate in power.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lix. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 14. This biography is headed in the editions of Suetonius with the name of Caligula, and I refer to it under that title: but it should be remarked that Suetonius in his text always calls this prince Caius or Caius Cesar, and such is the appellation given him uniformly by Tacitus, Seneca, and Pliny, as well as the Greek writers generally. I need not say that such is also his designation on medals. Aurelius Victor, in his trifling abridgment of history, is perhaps the first writer who gives him the name of Caligula. This, as has been mentioned, was a mere nickname of the camp, and though it continued current there, the emperor himself always resented it: "Neo impune cessit primipilario quod Caligulam dixerat." Senec. *de Const. Scep.* 18. The later acceptance of the name is due perhaps to the careless epitomists, who wished to save themselves trouble in distinguishing between the various Cæsars who bore the prænomen of Caius.

the mourning procession which conducted the remains of Tiberius from Misenum to Rome. The people streamed forth from the towns on the way and from the city itself to meet him, as the leader of a triumphal rather than of a funeral pageant. Along the roadside altars were decked for sacrifice, and steamed with incense; torches blazed and flowers were strown in profusion before him. Every joy and blessing were invoked upon his head, and voices were heard throughout the crowd addressing him with the most endearing appellations.<sup>1</sup> In the universal delight and anticipation of good days to come, the crimes and injuries of the dead tyrant were forgotten, and to the execution of the decree in his honour no resistance was offered. Though basking in the sunshine of popular favour, the behaviour of the young aspirant, for he could hardly yet feel secure of his position, was measured and discreet. As chief mourner at the imperial obsequies, he pronounced a funeral oration, the tone of which was sober and moderate, respectful alike to the deceased and to his people, nor unaccompanied with a decent tribute of tears. From the merits of Tiberius he turned with warmer enthusiasm to the exploits of Augustus and Germanicus, and traced to those sainted heroes of his line his own personal claims to the regard of the Roman people. From the forum the body was carried with the proper ceremonies to the Campus Martius for cremation, and the ashes finally enshrined in the Cæsaræan mausoleum.<sup>2</sup> At the close of the solemnities, Caius presented himself in the senate-house, and addressed the fathers and others there assembled in a speech full of flattery and submissiveness. He declared himself the child or ward of the senators, prepared to share with them the toils and pleasures of office, and to guide all his actions according to their wise direction.<sup>3</sup> Nor did he fail to assume a tone of regret

*Caius conducts  
the obsequies  
of Tiberius.*

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 13.: "Super fausta omina sidus, et pillum, et pupum et alumnus appellantes."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 15.; Dion, lvi. 28., lix. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Dion, lix. 6.

at being unable to accomplish the late emperor's wishes with regard to his infant grandson. *At his tender years, he said, he stands yet in need of tutors, teachers, and guardians: but I will be more than tutor, teacher, or guardian to him; I will be his father, and he shall be to me as a son.*<sup>1</sup> At the same time he scrupulously executed the will of Tiberius in every other particular. It comprised liberal donations to the prætorians and to the citizens generally: the former he doubled, the latter he increased by the sum which had been promised but never paid them, on his own assumption of the toga, together with the interest accruing. Nor were the police of the city, or the legions beyond the bounds of Italy, forgotten in this prudent liberality, which was still further enhanced by the payment of the bequests of Livia, which her parsimonious son had neglected to carry into effect.<sup>2</sup> For this and still greater profusion ample provision was found in the treasures accumulated by Tiberius, the sum of which was differently stated by the authorities of the day, but which, on the estimate of Suetonius, which is not the highest, may have amounted to twenty-one millions of our money.<sup>3</sup>

Nor were the liberal acts of the new emperor confined to this promiscuous munificence in gifts and largesses. He issued a general pardon to the occupants of the imperial prisons, and recalled the banished from their exile. The informations and pretended evidence relating to the treasonable practices which had been imputed to his mother and brothers, he burnt publicly in the forum, declaring at the same time that he had abstained from perusing them, and had not acquainted himself even with the names of the delators.<sup>4</sup> When a paper was presented to him

Liberal conduct  
of the new emperor.

<sup>1</sup> Philo. *leg. ad Cai.* 4.: ἐγὼ δὲ, ἔφη, παιδαγωγὸς καὶ διδασκάλους καὶ ἐπιτρόπους ὑπερβάλλον, ἑμαυτὸν ἤδη γράφω πατέρα, υἱὸν δὲ ἐκείνου.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 51.; *Calig.* 16.; *Dion.* lix. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 37.: "Totum illud Tiberii Cæsaris viciæ ac septies millies sestertium." Sæstertia 27 × 100,000 = 2,700,000 = at 8s. the sestertium, 21,600,000l.

<sup>4</sup> *Dion.* lix. 6.

which purported to divulge an intrigue against him, he rejected it with the exclamation that he had given cause of offence to no man.<sup>1</sup> He proscribed the most infamous ministers of vice, the creatures of the worst of the nobles, and as it was reported of Tiberius himself, expelling them indignantly from the city, and was with difficulty dissuaded from throwing them into the sea. The writings of Labienus, Cremutius, and Cassius Severus, which the senate had suppressed, were at his instance restored to circulation: it was for the interest, he declared, of every good prince that history should be written and read. He published the accounts of the state, after the example of Augustus, an example which Tiberius from indolence or reserve had neglected to follow. As regarded the judicial functions of the emperor, the behaviour of Caius was eminently popular, in abolishing the appeal to himself from the tribunal of the superior magistrates. Into the means and character of the senators he made no invidious inquisition; they had suffered enough under the Tiberian persecutions: but he revised strictly, though with no undue severity, the roll of the equestrian order, enriching it with the addition of many new members from the wealthiest classes of Italy and the provinces; and he added a fifth decuria to the bench of judges, which was overburdened with its duties. Under his auspices many provincial communities received the gift of Roman citizenship.<sup>2</sup> The heir of the Drusi attempted, as Suetonius expresses it, to revive the Comitia for the election of magistrates; but his magnanimous policy was defeated by the indifference of the nobles to public office, for the candidates, it seems, were seldom more numerous than the places, or if a greater number at any time offered, they contrived to come to a private arrangement among themselves.<sup>3</sup> The centuries convened for

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 15.: "Contendens, nihil sibi admissum cur cuiquam invisus esset."

<sup>2</sup> See Agrippa's speech in Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* c. 36.: φίλων ἐνίων πατρίδας ἑλθης τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἡξίωσας πολιτείας.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 16.: "Tentavit et comitiorum more revocato suffragia populo

the election found they had nothing to do, but go through the empty forms and disperse. After two years' trial, Caius resumed the plan of direct nomination recommended to him by his predecessors, and as far as the real substance went, the usage of popular election was finally suppressed. Such, together with the remission of the percentage on sales in Italy, an impost which, though trifling in its amount, seemed to trench on the cherished immunity of the conquering race, and many acts of liberality to individuals, were the beneficent measures which ushered in the reign of the new emperor.<sup>1</sup> His piety towards his own relations was not less conspicuous, nor did it serve less to recommend him to the regard of the citizens. Immediately after his first appearance in the senate, he hastened, amidst the prayers and vows of the people—for the weather was tempestuous—to seek in person the ashes of his mother and brother in their desolate islands. Having collected these august remains, and carefully incurned them, he conveyed them in his own arms to Rome, ascending the river from Ostia with funeral pomp, and laid them in the imperial mausoleum, appointing at the same time an annual service in memory of the deceased. The name of the month of September he changed to Germanicus, an alteration which was not destined to survive him, and conferred upon Antonia, through a decree of the senate, all the distinctions which the piety of Tiberius had before assigned to Livia.<sup>2</sup> Claudius, who had hitherto been left in the obscurity of the equestrian rank, he invited to assume the consulship in conjunction with himself, and saluted the young

reddere." Dion no doubt expresses a common and probably a just feeling of the injudiciousness of this attempted concession of political rights to a people who seemed incapable of using them discreetly: *τοὺς δ' ἔμψρονας ἔλνπῃσαντο, ελογισαμένους οὐκ ἔαν ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς αἱ ἀρχαὶ αὐθις γένηνται . . . πολλὰ καὶ δεῖνὰ συμβῆσθαι.* lix. 9. Comp. Vell. ii. 124., cited above.

<sup>1</sup> These acts, which all belong to an early period in this reign, have been here brought together in one view, though some of them may date, perhaps, in its second year. The revival of the Comitia was made in 791: the first consulship of Caius was assumed without any pretence of election.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lix. 3.

Tiberius, on the day of his claiming the toga, with the title of Prince of the Roman Youth. His natural sensibility prompted him, further, to demand honours for his three sisters, a thing unheard of under the Roman commonwealth. It was ordained that the sacramental oath of the citizens to the emperor should contain the words, *I will not hold myself nor my own children dearer than Caius Cæsar and his sisters*, and that every motion of the consuls in the senate should conclude with the invocation of a blessing upon him and them together.<sup>1</sup> All these measures were accepted with unbounded delight by the jubilant populace. When Caius assumed, at the instance of the senate, the collective honours of the empire, he had insisted on making a single exception, declining with the modesty of tender youth the appellation of Father of his Country.<sup>2</sup> This conduct the people regarded perhaps with satisfaction, as a tribute to the Nemesis which scans with evil eye the heights of human prosperity; nor were they less pleased, we may believe, at his refraining from pressing on the senate the confirmation of Tiberius's acts. The name of the tyrant disappeared from henceforth from the public instruments, in which the titles and functions of succeeding emperors were recited.<sup>3</sup> The vulgar notion of Deity was that of a Being who presides with dignified interest over the sports and amusements of his creatures, and to such a character the gloomy recluse of Capræ had, in the estimation of the Romans, no claim whatever. If the senate, with its usual servility, would have acquiesced in the apotheosis of a tyrant who had degraded and decimated it, the citizens interposed to forbid the honour, and Caius made no effort to enforce it. The enthusiasm with which the early promise of the new principate was received, might be estimated from the multitude of an hundred and sixty thousand victims which, it was computed, were offered in gratitude to the Gods in the course of the first three months. Its birthday, it was decreed, should be sanctified with the name and

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 15.<sup>2</sup> Dion, lix. 3.<sup>3</sup> Dion, lix. 9.

rites of the Parilia, as the era of the new foundation of the state.<sup>1</sup>

The young man's personal defects and vices, of which some mention has already been made, were unknown, it must be observed, at this time to the mass of the citizens. The cunning and selfishness which we have already noticed in him, the ferocity which found pleasure, it is said, in the sight of torments and executions, his unworthy taste for the company of dancers and gladiators and for vulgar shows, the defects in his education, and his moral inaptitude for all elevating subjects of thought, had been concealed from the eyes of the Romans in the recesses of the palace. For five years his residence had been mostly confined to Capræ. At a later period it was reported that, in spite of all his dissimulation, he had not been able to conceal the vileness of his nature from Tiberius himself, and the monster was supposed more than once to have remarked, not without a grim satisfaction, that Caius lived for his own and all men's perdition, and that he was rearing a serpent for the Romans, and a Phaethon for the universe.<sup>2</sup> But if any vague rumours of this prince's faults reached the ears of the multitude, they were easily excused in a son of Germanicus, on the plea of inexperience and bad example. The Romans had yet to learn the horror of being subject to a master who had never been trained to mastery over himself. His accession to the principate was signalized, as we have seen, by unexpected moderation, by profuse liberality, and by some traits of generous feeling; but when on the calends of July, three months later, he assumed the consulship, he confirmed their warmest anticipations by an address to the senate, in which he exposed without reserve all the vices of his predecessor, and denounced them to general execration. At the same time he promised to conduct his own career on very different principles, and declared himself the

The first consulship of Caius.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 14. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 11.: "Exitio suo omniumque Caium vivere, et se natri eem pop. Romano, Phaethontem orbi terrarum educare."

devoted minister of the august assembly before him. The fathers, apprehensive that such auspicious sentiments might one day change, thought it possible to fix them by decreeing that the harangue which contained them should be annually recited in their presence. During the two months which followed Caius seems to have striven assiduously to redeem his pledge of good government. Untrained as he was, and immoderate alike in every caprice, he threw himself perhaps into this work with feverish impetuosity. The liberal and equitable measures connected with his name may be for the most part referred to this brief period, during which he placed himself in fact as well as in name at the head of affairs. Two summer months were honourably spent in a labour which was probably beyond his strength. On the arrival of the last day of August, the anniversary of his birth, he proposed to exchange the duties of industry for those of festive hospitality. His popularity, which had gone on increasing from day to day, was crowned by the ardour with which, descending from the awful chair of state, he plunged into the full tide of the national amusements, by the splendour of the shows he exhibited, and the novelty as well as variety of the dissipations he provided. He professed to restore the golden age of Augustus, the age, as he imagined, of universal recreation, which had suffered a gloomy eclipse under the leaden sceptre of Tiberius. The consecration of a temple to the divine founder of the empire, which had been slowly completed by his successor, furnished a fitting memorial for the birthday of the reigning sovereign. The magnificence which was now displayed was such as had not been witnessed at least by two generations. The ceremony was conducted by Caius himself, in a triumphal robe, borne in a chariot drawn by six horses: after the completion of the sacrifices, a hymn was sung by a select chorus of noble children, whose fathers and mothers were both alive; a banquet was given, not to the senators only, but also to their wives and families, as well as to the mass of the citizens; the festival was followed by an

His devotion to business.

His public entertainments.



entertainment of divers kinds of music, and by horse and chariot races, recurring in rapid succession through two days. Four hundred bears, and as many lions and panthers, were slaughtered in the amphitheatre; patrician youths enacted the game of Troy; while the emperor himself presided over these manifold sports, and sate benignly through them with his sisters by his side, and surrounded by the ministers of the Augustan hero-worship. That no citizen might be required to absent himself from a scene in which his prince condescended to take delight, the public offices were closed and business suspended, and even the term of private mourning was abridged. Widows, provided at least they were not pregnant, might straightway marry without scandal. To set the spectators quite at ease, they were not required to make their obeisance to the emperor; they were even permitted to disencumber themselves of their sandals, as at a private entertainment, and to cover their heads for protection against the sun, as in the forum and the streets. This, it is said, was the first occasion of the use of cushioned benches at the games; but as yet this indulgence was confined to the senators only.<sup>1</sup>

Such a festive inauguration of amusements long disused might be excused on the first celebration of an imperial birthday, at the outset of a young prince's reign, and at the close of a weary session of public business. But with Caius it was the opening of a new era of enjoyment from which he never afterwards desisted. Resigning in the third month the chair of magistracy he rushed for recreation into the wildest dissipations. While the consul suffectus supplied his place at the head of affairs, the emperor abandoned himself to a long holiday of uninterrupted amusement. His enthusiasm for the public spectacles was the frenzy of one just escaped from the dreary confinement of a hermitage. Soon sated with every fresh object, he sought renewed excitement in variety and strangeness. He

He rushes into  
dissipation.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lix. 7.; Suet. *Calg.* 17.

introduced the novelty of nocturnal spectacles, at which the whole city was illuminated with lamps and torches. Money and viands, at his command, were thrown liberally to the populace. He indulged too in a giddy humour which was not always dignified. On one occasion, when he feasted the citizens at a gorgeous banquet, he was so pleased with the justice a certain knight did to the luxuries before him, that he ordered his own plate to be offered to him. A senator, who similarly gratified him, was inscribed at once on the list of prætors. The games of the circus were continued, with occasional interludes, through the whole twelve hours of the day; and on some special festivals the arena was strown with cinnabar and borax, and the chariots driven by none under the rank of a senator.<sup>1</sup> But even these follies were less criminal than the vices and sensualities to which they led the way. If Caius desired that his people should riot without stint in the pleasures which had so long been grudged them, not less was he resolved to indulge himself to the utmost in the gratification of every sense. He let fall the mask, hitherto but loosely worn, of discretion and modesty, and revelled with furious appetite in the grossest voluptuousness of every kind. The consequence of these excesses was not slow to follow. The young man's weakly constitution was unable to bear the strain to which he subjected it, and in the eighth month of his delirious dream he was prostrated by a severe and dangerous illness. The warm sympathy which was now displayed for him, not in Rome only but throughout the provinces, shows how large a space the chief of the Roman state already filled in the interests of the vast population over which he seemed so conspicuously to tower. Multitudes crowded round the palace in which he lay, both by day and night, making anxious inquiries after his health. A citizen,

Caius falls sick.

Despair of the people.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 18. Pliny mentions this use of cinnabar (minium) and borax (chrysocolle). *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 27: "Visumque jam est Neronis principis spectaculis arenam Circi chrysocolle sterni, quum ipse concolori panno aurigaturus esset." He describes these substances in xxxiii. 26, 27. foll.

Afranius Potitus, solemnly devoted his own life for the prince's preservation, and a knight named Atanius Secundus vowed to descend into the arena, and fight among the gladiators, in the event of his happy restoration. Such were the extravagances which found favour in that day of unreal and fantastic sentiment. The Romans themselves were not perhaps unconscious of the folly which they encouraged and applauded, and the story that Caius on his recovery compelled his devotees, the one to kill himself, the other to risk the chances of mortal combat, was possibly invented as an expression of the prevailing cynicism of the times.<sup>1</sup>

The account which has been preserved to us of the grief and dismay of the provinces at the prospect of the emperor's early loss is remarkable, not only as a testimony to the wide-spread interest in his person, but for the picture it presents of the general prosperity at this epoch. We must remember that the shadow of the Tiberian tyranny extended little beyond the immediate precincts of Rome and Capræ, and though the description which follows is fantastically drawn, it seems to betoken an actual state of substantial and permanent well-being, not confined to a single locality, nor dependent on the life of an individual, but flowing from a well-organized and universal system of administration. *Who, asks Philo, the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, was not amazed and delighted at beholding Caius assume the government of the empire, tranquil and well ordered as it was, fitted and compact in all its members, North and South, East and West, Greek and Barbarian, Soldier and Civilian, all combined together in the enjoyment of a common peace and prosperity! It abounded everywhere in accumulated treasures of gold and silver, coin and plate; it boasted a vast force both of horse and foot, by land and by sea, and its resources flowed in a perennial stream. Nothing was to be seen throughout our cities but altars and sacrifices, priests clad in white and garlanded, the*

Excitement  
and distress in  
the provinces.

joyous ministers of the general mirth; festivals and assemblies, musical contests and horse races, wakes by day and by night, amusements, recreations, pleasures of every kind and addressed to every sense. The rich, he continues, no longer trampled upon the poor, the strong upon the weak, masters upon servants, or creditors on their debtors; but the independence of every class met with due respect; so that the Saturnian age of the poets might no longer be regarded as a fiction, so nearly was it revived in the life of that blessed era. Such was the state of things at the accession of Caius; such, he adds, it remained for a space of seven happy months, at the end of which the news arrived of the alarming illness of the emperor.<sup>1</sup> Alas! he had discarded the simplicity of his earlier mode of living; he had abandoned himself to wine and lust and manifold excesses, and in that short space he had reached the brink of a premature grave. When these sad news, says Philo, were spread among the nations,—for the season for sailing was about to close with the decline of autumn, and all who did not wish to winter abroad were hastening home from every quarter,—every enjoyment was at once cast aside, every city and house was clouded with sorrow and dejection, in proportion to its recent hilarity. All parts of the world sickened with Caius, and were worse sick than he, for his was the sickness of the body only, theirs of the soul. All men reflected on the evils of anarchy; its wars, plagues, and devastations, from which they foresaw no protection but in the emperor's recovery. But as soon as the disease began to abate, the rumour swiftly reached every corner of the empire, and universal were the excitement and anxiety to hear it from day to day confirmed. The safety of the prince was regarded by every land and island as iden-

<sup>1</sup> The security and outward prosperity of the empire under this principate may be further inferred from the curious comment of Orosius: "Servi rebelles et fugitivi gladiatores perterruere Romam, evertere Italiam, Siciliam delevere, jam pæne universo humano generi toto orbe metuendi. In diebus autem Salutis hoc est, temporibus Christianis, convellere quietem non potest vel Caesar infestus." Oros. vii. 5.

*tical with its own. Nor was a single country ever so interested before in the health of any one man, as the whole world then was in the preservation of the adorable Caius. So blind, concludes the sage, is the mind of man to the matters that most nearly concern it, guessing and imagining this and that, but in fact knowing nothing.*<sup>1</sup>

This extravagant flattery, such as that against which the mature good sense of Pompeius had not been proof, easily

Caius is corrupted by flattery.

turned the weak and giddy brain of Caius Cæsar.

He began in his wild hallucinations to regard the

life which had been saved by so many prayers

as something sacred and divine, and to justify to himself any means that might seem conducive to its protection. He felt

aggrieved by the nearness of the youthful cousin whom he had deprived of his inheritance, and quickly persuaded himself that his existence was a source of danger to the occu-

He puts the young Tiberius to death.

pant of the throne. It was enough to affirm that

the wretched object of his jealousy had plotted against him: the citizens had no love nor interest

but for the child of Germanicus, the giver of all good gifts to them; and when Caius caused him to be privately despatched, not venturing still, from a sense of shame perhaps rather than of distrust, to bring him to trial, they acquiesced in the murder as an act of wholesome expediency.<sup>2</sup>

A centurion presented the poor lad with a sword, with the order to thrust it into his own bosom; but so untrained was he in the use of weapons, that he was obliged, it was said, to ask instruction how to use it effectually.<sup>3</sup>

The charm which blinded the Romans to the crimes and vices of their new ruler was simply the contrast he presented

Degraded manners of Caius.

in his manners to the sullen recluse who had

robbed them of their pleasures. Caius was endowed with no personal recommendations of figure or coun-

<sup>1</sup> Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 4.

<sup>2</sup> Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 10.: ἀκοινώνητον ἀρχὴν θεοῦ φύσεως ἀκίνητος . . . οὐτος δὲ παθεῖν ἐμέλλησεν ἂν . . . ἰσχυρότερος ἂν ἦναι . . .

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 23.; Dion, *lix.* 9; Philo, *l. c.*

tenance. His features, if not altogether devoid of beauty, were deformed by a harsh and scowling expression, and seem even in the rigid marble to writhe with muscular contortion. His head was bald; his complexion sallow and livid; his body was long, and his neck and legs slender; his gait was shambling, and his voice hoarse and dissonant.<sup>1</sup> But he was popular with the rabble, and the knights and senators, who had lately trembled before the sovereign, now cowered before the rabble; for he lived in the eyes of the people: all his actions were public; he sate through the day the observed of all observers in the circus; even his vices and sensual indulgences, gross and startling as they were, he made matters of parade and ostentation. The habits of Greece and Asia had suffered the rulers of the state to take part in the public contests of skill and agility, from which the pride of the Roman noble revolted; kings of Hellenic blood had not disdained to contend for prizes in the lists at Antioch or Selucia; even the renegade Antonius had striven for mastery in the schools of Alexandria. With such examples before him, Caius, the first of the Roman emperors, did not forbear from singing and dancing in public, under the tuition of a noted tragedian.<sup>2</sup> His passion for the sports of the circus led him to descend in person into the arena as a charioteer, and even it is said, as a gladiator.<sup>3</sup> If the base multitude

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius (*Calig.* 50.) and Seneca (*de const. Sap.* 18.) vie with one another in investing this prince with the most odious traits of deformity: "Statura fuit eminenti, colore expallido, corpore enormi, gracillitate maxima cervicis et crurum, oculis et temperibus cencavis, fronte lata et torva, capillo raro ac circa verticem nullo, hirsutus cætera." "Tanta illi palloris insaniam testantis fœditas erat, tanta oculorum sub fronte anili latentium torritas, tanta capitis destituti et emendicatis capillis aspersi deformitas," &c. This is mere sign-painting. Medals and busts concur in giving us such a countenance as I have described in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lxx. 5. 29.; Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 30.

<sup>3</sup> Dion, lxx. 5.: προίόντος δὲ δὴ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ ἐς ζήλωμα καὶ ἐς ἀγώνισμα πολλῶν προήλθεν ἄρματα τε γὰρ ἤλασε καὶ ἐμονομέχτησεν. δρχήσει τε ἐχρήσατο, καὶ τραγῳδίαν ὑπεκρίνατο· καὶ ταῦτα μὲν πον αἰεὶ ἐποίει· ἀπαξ δὲ ποτε τοὺς πρῶτους τῆς γεροντίας σπουδῇ νυκτὸς, ὡς καὶ ἐπ' ἀναγκαῖόν τι βούλημα μεταπεμφόμενος, ὠρχήσατο.

were delighted at seeing knights and senators driven to exhibit themselves for their amusement, much more were they charmed at the condescension of the emperor himself, in bearing a part, like the deities of old, in the sports and contests of his creatures. From this time, under imperial encouragement, charioteering began to take the place of a state institution. The rival parties or factions were known by their colours,—the Green, the Blue, the Red, and the White,—and the people enlisted themselves on the sides of their favourites with an ardour that menaced sometimes the peace of the city. The Green was the faction to which Caius attached himself: he frequented its stables, lived familiarly with its grooms and drivers, and gave all his confidence to some of its most noted performers. He endowed it with a separate place of exercise, a circus or stadium, in the fourteenth region of the city, to which the name of Caian continued long afterwards to be attached.<sup>1</sup>

The nobles might sigh over this odious degradation of the majesty of the Cæsars; yet it was better, they might think, that Caius should prostitute it in these trifling amusements, than guard it with the cruel jealousy of Tiberius. As long as the emperor and people were amused together, they hoped to enjoy in tranquillity their own voluptuous indolence; but they must have beheld with dismay the prodigality which in a few months had squandered all the savings of the late reign, and began to call for fresh contributions; nor could they have been unconcerned at the increasing bloodshed and ferocity which now distinguished the gladiatorial shows. The amphitheatre of Taurus was not spacious enough for the com-

Bloodiness of  
the gladiatorial  
shows.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lix. 4.; Suet. *Calig.* 55.: “Prasine factioni addictus et deditus.” On one occasion he presented a charioteer of the Green, named Eutychus, with a sum of 2,000,000 sesterces, or 16,000*l.* Suet. l. c.; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 3. It was, I suppose, in his enthusiasm for the art that he threatened, according to Suetonius (c. 55.), to make his horse Incitatus, or Galloper, a consul. Dion believes that he actually did make him a priest of his own divinity (lix. 28.).

batants who were launched into the arena. The Septa in the Campus Martius, and other capacious buildings, were seized for these cruel ceremonies. Not only did the emperor himself exhibit these spectacles; he required the prætors and ædiles, who since the disuse of popular election had been relieved from this service, to conform once more to the custom of the commonwealth. The restrictions imposed by Augustus on the number of the gladiators were utterly swept away. It was the delight of Caius to witness, not the dexterous fence of single pairs of swordsmen, but the promiscuous struggling of armed bands together. He was not content with the combats of slaves or criminals, or even of occasional volunteers from the ranks of Roman citizenship. He compelled the free and noble to expose themselves in these horrid contests on various pretences, and on one occasion presented as many as six-and-twenty knights together. The combats with wild beasts were carried on with the same prodigality of human blood. Once, when the number of criminals condemned to this service was not found sufficient, he suddenly commanded some of the spectators within the rails to be dragged into the arena, and opposed defenceless to the lions.<sup>1</sup>

Caius was not slow, as might be expected, to profit by the lessons he was thus taking in the art of shedding blood. There was still another personage in Rome on whom he looked with no less jealousy than on the innocent Tiberius, the man to whom he owed his empire and possibly even his life. The disposition of the late emperor towards his nephew had been always doubtful. It was supposed by many that he detested his evil nature, and meditated his removal for the safety of one nearer to him. Macro, the tyrant's sole confidant, had boasted to

Macro and Ennia are put to death.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lix. 10.; Suet. *Calig.* 27. The story is not unlike some of the traits of cynical irony of which we read in Calus, and may not be beyond the bounds of credibility: the addition that he caused the tongues of these victims to be cut out, to prevent their outcries, seems a mere extravagant fiction. He was generally careful to keep on good terms with the populace.



Caius that he had saved him from destruction not less than three times. Whether this were true or not it was at least indiscreet to refer to it, and in hastening the end of Tiberius, and engaging the senate to accept his successor, Macro had laid obligations on Caius too great to be repaid. By this time the connexion between the prince and Ennia had become irksome to the licentious lover, as yet too shy to break his chains without blushing. He had promised to make her his empress, but he now hesitated to satisfy her claim. On the one hand, the husband ventured to give unpalatable counsels. He urged, it is said, high and generous views of the duties of empire, and rebuked, perhaps, the wanton levity which disgraced the purple of the Cæsars. On the other, the wife pressed the fulfilment of the engagement made to her, and lavished on her sated admirer caresses which now only disgusted him. Caius had released his friend Agrippa from confinement, and had conferred on him the sovereignty of a district in Palestine. But he did not immediately dismiss him to the enjoyment of it; his society was too agreeable, his counsels too convenient, to be at once dispensed with.<sup>1</sup> The prince continued to imbibe lessons in kingcraft from the Eastern politician, and to emulate, under his experienced guidance, the behaviour of Asiatic autocrats; and we shall not, perhaps, err in ascribing to this influence the resolution he adopted of ridding himself first of his cousin, and soon afterwards of his unamiable mentor. The storm which was impending over Macro was soon made visible to the courtiers. Caius was observed to frown at his approach, and heard to mutter, *I am no longer a boy, but see, here is my tutor; here is the subject who fancies himself a ruler: I who was born a prince, nursed by emperors, cradled in the cabinet of state, must bow forsooth to an audacious upstart, a novice affecting the airs of a hierophant.*<sup>2</sup> The minister, as may be supposed, did not long survive the utterance of such sentiments by such a master. Macro received, as the last favour,

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 8.

permission to be his own executioner, and Eunia, the partner of his intrigues, and equally disappointed in their success, fell at the same time with him.<sup>1</sup>

The destruction of the emperor's greatest benefactor was soon followed by the murder of a man of much higher distinction, and one whom from his station, experience, and intimate connexion with himself, he might have regarded as the most able and faithful of his friends. Caius had been united, as has been mentioned, in early youth to Claudia, the daughter of M. Junius Silanus, a personage whose ancient nobility might entitle him above almost any other citizen to the honour of an imperial alliance. The prince's father-in-law had been treated with the highest distinction both by Tiberius, with whom he had ingratiated himself by discreet but not servile flattery, and afterwards by his successor. He had been appointed to the government of Africa; but latterly the jealousy of Caius had been excited against him, the death of his daughter had relaxed the bonds of affinity between them, and the advice he presumed to offer was ill-received and, perhaps, unskilfully tendered. The command of the legion and one half the patronage of the province had been withdrawn from him, and placed in the hands of another officer, who was sent to watch him, and his innocently providing himself with an antidote to seasickness was represented, we are told, as a precaution against poison. Preparations were made, at the emperor's instance, for bringing him to trial for treasonable designs; but on the refusal of a noble orator to conduct the accusation, he was got rid of more summarily by an order to kill himself.<sup>2</sup>

M. Silanus  
commanded to  
put himself to  
death.

The emperor's pecuniary necessities, in which his extrav-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 26.; Dion, lix. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 28.; Dion, lix. 8.; and more particularly Philo, *legat. ad Cai.* 9. I cannot but regard this story as suspicious. It was a strong act of policy, and, in the disturbed state of the African frontier, not an unreasonable one, to weaken the arm of the senatorial proconsul by placing an Imperial legatus by his side. Such an encroachment, however, on the independence of the senate might naturally be resented, and an invidious fiction be grafted on it.

agance had already involved him, were perhaps the primary motive of this and other atrocities which quickly followed. The treasury was exhausted, and unpopular taxes had been remitted; but his passion for show and expenditure increased with indulgence, and the appetite of the people required to be pampered with novelty and variety. The fatal facility of murder, without even the intervention of any judicial process, offered a dire temptation to power unchecked by principle or pity. Delation, ever ready at his beck, was too dear an instrument for the prodigal to use. Informers and orators required a portion of the victim's fortune, and their most zealous efforts might sometimes fail of success; but a simple order to the accused to despatch himself was attended with no expense, and it was moreover sure to be effectual. This was the process by which the emperor's blows were made generally to fall on men whose sole crime was their riches; but if any pretext was wanted, the papers, real or pretended, of Tiberius, the same which he had recently professed to destroy unopened, sufficed to furnish matter of accusation. The two crimes most commonly alleged, as most odious to the nobility on the one hand, and to the populace on the other, were complicity in the bloody artifices of Sejanus, and hostility to the house of Germanicus.<sup>1</sup>

While the feelings of the profligate were thus becoming hardened in cruelty, they were suddenly embittered by a domestic loss, which, spoilt and pampered as he was, seems to have shattered his reason. The three sisters of Caius have already been mentioned. The scandalous rumours of the day insinuated that he had indulged an incestuous passion for all of them in turn, a horror almost unknown among all the horrors of Roman vice, and which only once before had been ascribed by party malice to a profligate of an earlier age. The public honours he had obtained for them, and certain marks of

Rapid succession of executions and confiscations.

Despair of Caius on the death of his sister Drusilla.  
A. U. 791.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lxx. 4, 6, 10, lx. 4.

favour he was said to bestow on them in private, hardly suffice to establish the credit of this charge as regards at least two of the sisters; but the commerce of Caius with Drusilla is too circumstantially attested to be reasonably rejected. He had been rebuked, it is said, for this intrigue by Antonia while yet a stripling. Tiberius united Drusilla to Cassius Longinus; but Caius, when he attained to power, separated her from her husband, and after living for some time openly with her, gave her to an unworthy favourite, M. Lepidus, who seems to have resigned her to him again without scruple. His passion for this poor creature knew no limits. In his illness, if we may believe our accounts, he had actually named her heiress of the empire and of his official dignities.<sup>1</sup> But he recovered, while she shortly afterwards fell sick and died. Caius was plunged in a frenzy of despair. He commanded that she should be honoured with a public funeral of extraordinary magnificence, that all business should cease, and even the commonest affairs of domestic life be suspended on pain of death.<sup>2</sup> For himself, he rushed from the city to the solitude of his Alban villa, declared that he was incapable of appearing in the distressing pageant, and abandoned himself instead to the most trifling amusements.<sup>3</sup> Once again he burst from his retreat, and with his beard and hair untrimmed hastened down the Italian coast till he reached Sicily, where he diverted himself with the ordering of some public games at Syracuse. When this humour was satisfied, he returned not less abruptly to Rome, to close the season of mourning and appoint divine honours for the deceased. The senate acquiesced without hesitation. Not only did it decree her the honours of the blessed Livia, but added that her gilded statue should be placed in the Curia, and

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 24.: "Heredem quoque honorum atque imperii ager instituit."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. l. c.: "Justitium indixit; in quo risisse, lavisse, comasce, cum parentibus aut conjuge liberisque, capital fuit." Comp. Dion, lix. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Seneca, *Cons. ad Polyb.* 36.: "Conspectum civium suorum profugit . . . iusta non præstitit, sed in Albano suo tesseris ac foro, provocatis hujusmodi aliis occupationibus, acerbissimi furoris levabat mala."

another in the temple of Venus, to which the same adoration should be paid as to the daughter of Jupiter. She was to bear in heaven the title of Panthea, the Universal Divinity; a temple was to be erected to her; men and women were enjoined to provide themselves with her consecrated images for their private devotions; women were to swear henceforth by no other name. The worship of Drusilla or Panthea was imposed a duty upon all the cities of Italy and the provinces. A senator, Livius Geminus, swore that he had with his own eyes beheld her ascend into heaven, and he confirmed the assertion by steadfastly imprecating curses on himself and his, if he spake not the truth. The perjury was awarded on earth by the gift of a million of sesterces. Having strained his morbid feelings to this pitch of fanaticism, the crazy monster relieved them by an outburst of cynical humour. He declared that if any man dared to mourn for his sister's death he should be punished, for she had become a goddess; if any one ventured to rejoice at her deification, he should be punished also, for she was dead.<sup>1</sup>

So far was Caius constant to this fantastic passion that he never afterwards swore, it is said, by any other name than Drusilla's. His unbridled fancy had before impelled him to snatch himself a wife from the arms of her husband, after the manner, as he himself pompously proclaimed, of Romulus and Augustus; and this victim being repudiated a few days only after the deification of Drusilla, he repeated the same feat with another.<sup>2</sup> The first of these wives was Orestilla, the consort of Cn. Piso, the son of the enemy of Germanicus; the other was Lollia Paulina, the most celebrated beauty of her days,

Caius married,  
and shortly re-  
pudiated, Lollia  
Paulina.

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, Dion, ll. cc. Seneca, however, by whom the story was probably suggested, gives it no such extravagant turn: "Eodem tempore quo templa illi constituebant ac pulvinaria, eos qui parum mœsti fuerant crudeli afficiebat animadversione."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 25. On the occasion of his marriage with Orestilla, the wife of C. Piso: "Matrimonium sibi repertum exemplo Romuli et Augusti." The first had thus carried off Hersilia (Plut. *Rom.* 14.), the last Livia.

who was united to a distinguished noble, Memmius Regulus, the consul who had arrested Sejanus.<sup>1</sup> But Caius was not smitten, perhaps, so much by the charms of her person as of her estate, for she was the richest woman in Rome, the heiress of the extortioner of Gaul; and the emperor, like a mere private spendthrift, was driven to restore his shattered fortunes by a judicious alliance. Lollia displayed her magnificence with a pomp truly imperial. *I have seen her, says Pliny, on no occasion of special solemnity, but at a plain citizen's bridal supper, all covered with pearls and emeralds—her hair and head-dress, ears, neck, and fingers—worth as much as forty millions of sesterces. Such was the style in which she came to witness the act of marriage. Nor were these the love tokens of a princely prodigal; they were the treasures of her grandsire, amassed from the spoils of provinces. Such was the end of all this rapine. Lollia suffered disgrace and perished by his own hand, that his granddaughter forsooth might blaze by lamp-light in the splendour of forty millions.*<sup>2</sup> But once united to the rapacious emperor, she was not suffered long to parade this brilliancy. She too was repudiated in her turn by the inconstant prince, and we can hardly suppose that she was suffered a second time to carry off her jewels with her.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, we shall find her recommended again for her riches as the bride of another emperor; nor does Pliny, in noting the splendour of her fortune, remark how suddenly she was deprived of it.

In the second year of his principate Caius performed an imposing ceremony, the distribution of crowns and sceptres to various foreign applicants. The solemnity was not the less interesting from the respect he paid to the forms of the republic. A silken curtain, then most rare and precious, was drawn across a lofty stage

Herod Agrippa  
gilds Rome for  
his sovereignty  
in the East.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lix. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* ix. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 25.: "Brevique missam fecit interdicto cujusquam in perpetuum coitu." This prohibition means, perhaps, that she was forbidden to contract another marriage, in order that the emperor might not be required to restore her portion.

in the forum; and the emperor was discovered seated between the consuls. He recited the decree of the senate, which conferred the throne of Ituræa upon Soemus, of the lesser Armenia upon Cotys, of Thrace upon Rhæmetalces, and of Pontus upon Polemo.<sup>1</sup> At the same time Agrippa, who recently, on the death of Philip, had been gratified with his tetrarchy, to which the districts of Abilene and Cœle-Syria had been added, was allowed, after long delay, to repair to his new dominions.<sup>2</sup> As the first pledge of his amity, the emperor had already presented him, on his release from custody, with a chain of gold of equal weight with the iron fetters which had bound him to his warder. This present was no more than a token perhaps of the riches which were at the same time heaped upon him, which enabled him to exhibit his accustomed magnificence in Rome during the period that Caius still chose to retain him about his own person. But these shining marks of favour, and the consciousness of his personal influence, did not fail to inspire him with more ambitious views. He aimed at recombining under his sceptre the broken fragments of the great sovereignty of Herod, one portion of which was now under the immediate government of Roman officials, another still occupied by his kinsman Antipas and his sister Herodias. He employed perhaps the period of his prolonged sojourn in Rome in imbuing his patron's mind with distrust of the rulers of Samaria; and the mutual recriminations of the Jewish princes, which the government forbade to issue in an appeal to arms, could only be controlled eventually by the direct decision of the emperor.

It was in the fall apparently of the year 791 that Agrippa sailed for the East. The speediest and surest voyage from Rome to Palestine lay not by way of Brundisium and the Hadrian and Carpathian seas, but by the longer route of Puteoli and Alexandria, on ac-

Agrippa arrives  
at Alexandria  
on his way to  
Palestine.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lix. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 7. 11. Agrippa was relieved from his attendance on his patron in the second year of the Caian principate, on promising to return whenever his presence was required.

count of its favourable winds, and the superiority of the vessels which ran between those important havens. It was to Alexandria, therefore, on the recommendation of the emperor himself, that Agrippa in the first instance repaired. His presence there gave rise to scenes of disorder, which were not without their influence on the future fortunes of the Jewish people, and must not be passed over in silence.

No one yet perhaps could augur that the Jewish people, the citizens of a narrow and obscure corner of the empire, would one day divide the interest of mankind with Rome itself, in a great and mortal struggle. Yet no other city but Jerusalem might seem at this period to rival the capital of the Cæsars, as the centre of a compact and at the same time a wide-spread nationality, and the beloved metropolis of innumerable colonies planted in every land. No other city was so bound to the hearts of its children throughout the world by its customs and traditions, its faith and its aspirations. No other possessed within its bosom the germs of universal conquest: it yet remained to be seen whether circumstances would suffer the material extension of its power over alien nations, or whether its authority should eventually be confined to a moral and spiritual pre-eminence. But as the presence of the Roman was felt on every foreign shore as that of a material organizer and controller, so the Jews appear in some mysterious way to have rebuked, by the force of their character, wherever they established themselves, the feeble decrepitude of the races around them. The disintegration of ancient nationalities was nowhere more manifest than in the teeming city of Alexandria, where the Greek and Copt mingled in ill-cemented union, and were bound most strictly together by their common hatred of the Jews residing among them. The number of this foreign race in Egypt has already been stated at a million; of the five sections of the great emporium of the East two were principally inhabited by Jews, and they were found scattered in considerable force throughout the others. But if the proportion of this element to the indigen-

The Jews at  
Alexandria in-  
sulted by the  
natives.



ous population was so large, its habits were less gregarious, its temper less excitable: it was devoted to the quiet pursuit of commerce or letters; it had no wish for the exercise of arms, nor was it entrusted with them. The native Alexandrians, however, regarded these Jewish denizens as aliens to be hated and despised; lively and turbulent themselves, they were ever ready to break out in violence against their graver neighbours, and it required all the vigilance and impartial austerity of the Roman rule to protect the one from the bitter animosity of the other. The arrival of Agrippa seems to have been the signal for an outburst of this national jealousy. It was the humour of the Alexandrians to mock and injure the Jews on all occasions: they now chose to make the new king of the Jews a special object of derision, and for this purpose taking an idiot of the name of Carabas, well known in their streets, they crowned him with a diadem of papyrus leaves, put a reed in his hand, and bore him in mock triumph through the city, attended by a body-guard of children armed with sticks.<sup>1</sup> On reaching the quarters of their foes they redoubled their shouts and acclamations, saluting him with the titles of Lord and King. Instead of checking this outrage, by which the Jews were naturally exasperated, the Roman Governor, Avilius Flaccus, seems to have encouraged and applauded it. This man, after serving Tiberius discreetly in the command of Egypt for the space of five years, had fallen out of favour with the new emperor, and was seeking, as the Jewish party imagined, to recover it. The cherished enmity of Jewish political leaders to Rome, and the uneasy jealousy of the state towards them, was well known to the men who bore rule in these parts: the Roman officials had themselves too often provoked them purposely by injustice, in order to make their exasperation a pretext for harsher measures of repression. Such perhaps was the object which Flaccus now had in view; such at least it appeared to the sufferers themselves, one of whom, the most dis-

<sup>1</sup> Philo, in *Flaccum*, 6.

tinguished name in their secular literature, has denounced it with no little eloquence and feeling. Tiberius had forbidden the worship of his pretended divinity in Rome: even in the provinces he had restrained and discouraged it. He knew that it was absurd; and nothing absurd in politics, he shrewdly determined, could continue to be always safe. But the crude inexperience of his youthful successor was troubled by no such scruples. The governors of the provinces were induced to believe that they could in no way pay court to him more palatably, than by impelling their subjects to the adoration of the Cæsar. The excessive repugnance of the Jews to admit any representations of the human form into their places of religious meeting incited Flaccus to adopt this means of humiliating them, and he instigated their fellow-citizens in Alexandria to demand that statues of the emperor should be erected in their synagogues. Tumults and bloodshed quickly followed. The Alexandrians, as the strongest party, drove the Jews into a single quarter of the city, plundering and burning their residences throughout the rest, and subjecting many of them to death and tortures. But the prefect, who had acted thus shamefully, found that in his zeal he had fatally overreached himself. The government at Rome, always sensitive about the condition of Egypt, was seriously alarmed and offended. He was summoned home to answer for the peril into which he had brought the storehouse of Italy, and sent thither in chains by his successor Bassus.<sup>1</sup>

Statues of the emperor intruded into the Jewish synagogues.

Disturbances at Alexandria.

Flaccus, the Roman governor, disgraced.

Agrippa hastily quitted the scene into which his presence had introduced so terrible a disturbance, and prosecuted his voyage to Palestine. His arrival in his new principality excited the alarm and jealousy of the rulers of Samaria, on whose compassion he had so lately lived. Antipas was wary and circumspect, slow, perhaps, to feel, and still slower to move; He-

Banishment of Herod Antipas and Herodias.

A. D. 89.  
A. U. 792.

<sup>1</sup> Philo in *Flacc.* 6-18.: τοῦτο καινότατον ὑπέμεινε Φλάκκος ἐν χώρῃ ἣς ἀφηγγεῖτο, πολεμίον τρόπον ζῶντων. Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 9. 1.

rodias, more quick and prompt, if not really more ambitious than her husband, urged him with all her influence to repair to Rome, and sue for the province of Judea, or at least for such a confirmation of his actual sovereignty as might secure it against the intrigues of their artful neighbour.<sup>1</sup> It was long before she could prevail on him to risk the voyage to Italy, whence so many occupants of Eastern thrones had never returned. At last they sailed together for Baïæ, where Caius was then sojourning, closely followed by Agrippa, with charges against them of complicity with a new revolution in Parthia, and of preparing to hold Samaria against the Romans with seventy thousand stand of arms they had there collected. The result of the interviews which the rivals had successively with the emperor was that Antipas was deprived of his sovereignty, and relegated, first to Lugdunum, and afterwards to the distant province of Spain.<sup>2</sup> Herodias, as the daughter of Antonia's friend Berenice, was indulged with an offer of pardon, together with some portion of her estates; but this, with the high spirit of a Jewish matron, she firmly rejected, and insisted on sharing her husband's disgrace. The fortunate Agrippa was now gratified with the addition of Samaria to his dominions. The province of Judea alone remained to reunite the sovereignty of Herod.

Agrippa receives Samaria, in addition to his tetrarchy of Galilee.

Caius had now played the autocrat without restraint or remonstrance for more than two years, and his pride had been inflated to the highest pitch. The foreign princes, whom he had assembled about his throne and admitted to his table, had pampered him with fulsome adulation. They had vied with one another in doing homage to him as the dispenser of crowns; they had suffered him to regard and treat them as his vassals, and acknowledged themselves as merely ministers of his paramount authority. When they contended among themselves for precedence, he

Caius claims divine worship.

<sup>1</sup> Salvador (i. 454.) reminds us how Antipas is characterized as a *fox* in the Gospels. St. Luke, xiii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 8. 2.

cut short the dispute with the maxim of Homer, *One chief, one king*. It is mentioned, as the height of his daring insolence, that he *all but* assumed the diadem, and converted the shadow of the principate into the reality of a royal rule.<sup>1</sup> But the Eastern King was always near allied to Divinity. This was a political dogma which the Macedonians had found established in Asia, and they had willingly availed themselves of it. Regarding the Godhead as a Spirit of Joy and Bounty only, without the sterner attributes and moral excellences attached to him by the Western and Northern world, the Oriental, and the Greek especially, was prone to discover an emanation of Divinity in every human dispenser of worldly blessings. *Giver of good things, Giver of prosperity*, was the title with which he was content to address the Judge and Supreme Ruler of the Universe:<sup>2</sup> it was easy to divert his adoration from the supreme to the lesser givers, his own chiefs and kings, who were nearer to him, and whose bounty he could more sensibly appreciate. If they were not almighty, even the Gods above were subject one to another, and all to Fate:<sup>3</sup> if they were vicious and impure, the Gods too had their pleasant vices: their follies and even their crimes were little regarded as long as these imperfections did not touch the mass of their worshippers. It was long before the higher moral sense of the Romans could yield assent to this degrading view of the Deity; but when the populace grew thoroughly corrupt, and imbued in a great degree with Oriental phantasies, the upper class, with no belief of its own, was willing that they should amuse and deceive themselves by any belief however preposterous. The divine honours paid to so many of his race, and the reg-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 22.: "Exclamavit, εἰς κοίρανος ἔστω εἰς βασιλεὺς: Nec multum abfuit quin statim diadema sumeret, speciemque principatus in regni formam converteret."

<sup>2</sup> Callimachus, in *Jov.* 91.: δῶτορ ἐάων, δῶτορ ἀπημοσύνης . . .

<sup>3</sup> Stat. *Sylv.* iii. 3. 52.:

"Mox crescit in illos

Imperium Superis; sed habent et Numina legem."

ular form which the Cæsar-worship was assuming amidst the ruins of ancient rituals, made a lively impression on the imagination of the excitable Caius. When eleven cities of Asia contended before the senate for the honour of devoting themselves to the worship of Tiberius, the claims of Miletus and Ephesus had been rejected because they were too deeply engaged in the service of Apollo and Diana.<sup>1</sup> The cult of the emperor, they were given to understand, ought, wherever it was established, to precede every local religion; or rather his worshippers ought to divide their vows and sacrifices with no other patron. The principle thus gravely asserted Caius carried out without compunction. He aspired not only to be recognised as a God, but claimed the same pre-eminence among the Gods as he enjoyed without a rival among human potentates. His assumption of the name and attributes sometimes of Hercules, sometimes of Bacchus, sometimes of Apollo, was the whim of his monstrous imagination; but when he announced that he was the Latian Jupiter himself, still more when he pretended to converse as an equal or superior with Jupiter, and challenged him with an Homeric verse to combat, he asserted that the worship of the Cæsar was paramount throughout the world to every other formula of religious devotion.<sup>2</sup>

This assumption of divinity, in which even the Romans acquiesced, met, we may suppose, with no resistance, and was admitted almost without remark in the provinces generally. The Athenians might sigh to see the heads of some of their noblest images struck off, and the trunks carried to Rome to be united to the features of a barbarian emperor; but it was the insult to art, taste, and feeling, not to their languid religious princi-

This claim admitted generally with indifference,

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iv. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 22.: "Cum Capitolino Jove secreto fabulabatur, modo insurrans, ac præbens invicem aurem, modo clarius nec sine jurgila. Nam cominantis audita est: ἡ μ' ἀντίειπ', ἡ ἐγὼ σέ." *Il.* xxiii. 724. Comp. Dion, lix. 28., and a story in Seneca, *de Ira*, i. ult.

ples, which they chiefly resented.\* But with the Jews, both at home and abroad, it was far otherwise. Where, indeed, their numbers were few, and their sense of nationality weakened by distance or dispersion, the order to set up the emperor's statue in their synagogues might excite no direct resistance; but wherever numbers and union, as well as obstinate prejudices, gave them strength, they sternly refused to admit the accursed thing <sup>but resented with indignation by the Jews.</sup> within their walls, and defied the powers of earth to intrude it on them. At Alexandria the contest had issued in riot and bloodshed. The Jews were overpowered for the time. We have seen indeed that the indiscretion with which the prefect had encouraged their assailants had been followed by his disgrace; but this had been merely a popular persecution, and the resistance of the Jews to it might be excused, and its abettor punished. When, however, the decree of the senate should be launched, with the sanctions of law and power, for the establishment of the emperor's worship, in the synagogue, opposition to it would be regarded with far other eyes, the fury of the multitude would be backed by all the force of Rome, and the hands of the prefect strengthened for a complete and final victory. When Bassus arrived to take the place of Flaccus, he bore, perhaps, in his hands the instrument of this spiritual tyranny. The triumph of the Jewish party was but short-lived. Not only in Alexandria but, as they were informed, in Judea and throughout the world, the decree for the worship of the idol of stone would be speedily enforced without remorse. Possibly there was still a moment of suspense before the bolt fell. The Alexandrian Jews sought to avert it by a direct appeal to the sense or mercy of the emperor. Among many learned and eloquent men who adorned their persuasion, was at that time one of peculiar eminence, whose profound erudition and skill in moulding the belief of his country to the philosophy of

\* Suet. l. c. We must remember the infatuated worship they had themselves paid to Antonius in the guise of Bacchus more than seventy years before.

the Greeks, have given him a high place in the ranks of classical literature. Philo the Jew, as he was specially designated, to distinguish him from the many scholars who once bore the same name but have long passed into oblivion, was now sent with four others as a deputation from his countrymen in Egypt, to lay before Caius the grievances under which they suffered, to explain the nature of their religious scruples, and to avert if possible the wrath of the self-styled Divinity by protestations of loyalty and true devotion.

The account of this embassy, which the illustrious envoy has himself left us, is one of the most curious monuments of antiquity. No other fragment of ancient history, excepting perhaps the fourth of Juvenal's Satires, gives us so near an insight into the actual domestic life of the rulers of the world; and though the style of Philo is laborious and turgid, and the character of his mind, ever exercised in weaving plausible unrealities, such as to engage little confidence in his judgment or even in his statements of fact, nevertheless we cannot rise from its perusal without feeling that we have made a personal acquaintance, to use the words of another sophist, with *the kind of beast called a tyrant*.<sup>1</sup> As Antipas and Agrippa had contended which should outstrip the other in first reaching the prince's ante-chamber, so the Alexandrians sent now their deputation as well as the Jews, and both the one and the other landed almost at the same moment on the coast of Campania. The Jews were much dismayed at hearing on their arrival that Petronius, the governor of Judea, had been commanded to erect a colossal figure of the Cæsar in the temple of Jerusalem, even in the Holy of Holies;<sup>2</sup> and that the consummation of this crowning impiety, retarded for a

<sup>1</sup> The saying of Apollonius of Tyana, twenty years later, as recorded by Philostratus, iv. 37.: τὸ δὲ θῆριον τοῦτο ὃ καλοῦσιν οἱ πολλοὶ τύραννο, οὔτε ἐπὶ οὐαὶ αἱ κεφαλὰὶ αὐτῶν οἶδα, οὔτε εἰ γαμψόνηχόν τε καὶ καρχαροδοῦν ἴσται.

<sup>2</sup> Philo, *legat. ad Caium*, 26.: οἴχεται ἡμῶν τὸ ἱερὸν ἀνδριάντα κολοσσάουσις, ὡς νῦν τῶν ἀδύτων ἀνατεθῆναι ὁ Γάιος προσέταξε Διὶς ἐπικλῆσιν αὐτοῦ.

moment by that officer's hesitation at the prayers, the murmurs, and the menaces of the true believers, was urged more imperatively than before by a fresh injunction from Rome, and now only awaited the completion of the abominable image by the hands of Phœnician artificers. At this moment the tyrant was flitting from one of his villas to another, followed by trains of courtiers and petitioners, and among them the rival envoys of Egypt, long unable to obtain an audience. At last he summoned these last to an interview together in the gardens of Mæcenas, which he had connected with the ample pleasure grounds of the Lamias, and where he was engaged in planning extensions and alterations, to adapt the proudest seats of the nobility to the proportions of a royal residence. *This was the spot, says Philo, chosen whereon to enact the catastrophe of the great drama of Jewish nationality.<sup>1</sup> Here, he continues, we found the tyrant, surrounded by stewards, architects, and workmen,—every hall and chamber thrown open for his inspection,—ranging from room to room. Called into his presence, we advanced reverently and discreetly, saluting him by the title of Augustus and Emperor. Halting for a moment in his eccentric course, he suddenly addressed them. What, said he, are you the God-haters, the men who deny my divinity, confessed by all the world besides?<sup>2</sup> and he raised his hand towards heaven with a frightful execration. The Alexandrians pressed forward in their turn with odious adulation. Lord and master, said their spokesman Isidorus, still more, and more justly, will you hate them, when you learn that of all mankind these Jews alone have refused to sacrifice for your safety. . . . . Lord Caius, Lord Caius, exclaimed the Jews, we are slandered.<sup>3</sup> We have sacrificed for you, we have offered hecatombs, we have not feasted on the flesh of our victims, but*

<sup>1</sup> Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 44.: κείθε γὰρ ἐπὶ παροῦσιν ἡμῖν ἢ κατὰ πάντος τοῖ ἐθνους ἐμελλε σκηνοβατεῖσθαι δραματοποιεῖα.

<sup>2</sup> Philo, *I. c.*: ὑμεῖς ἐστέ οἱ θεομισεῖς, οἱ θεὸν μὴ νομίζοντες εἶναι με, τὸν ἔδη παρὰ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνωμολογημένον.

<sup>3</sup> Philo, *c.* 45.: κῆρυε Γάιε, σκωφαντοῦμεθα.



*have made holocausts of them, not once but thrice already: first when you assumed the empire, again when you were restored from your dire disease, once more for the success of your expedition against the Germans. . . . Be it so,* replied he, *ye sacrificed for me, but not to me.* The unfortunate Jews were struck dumb with *abysmal terror*.<sup>1</sup> For a moment they were relieved by the emperor suddenly rushing off to some distant apartments, some upstairs, some below, examining their proportions and decorations, approving here, ordering changes and reconstructions elsewhere. The envoys were hurried in his train, backwards and forwards, the Alexandrians pressing on with them, and ever jeering and mocking them, *as in a play*. But at the next pause in his career, Caius turned round abruptly with the question, *Pray, gentlemen, why do not you eat pork?* Whereat the Alexandrians in their glee so far forgot themselves as to burst into loud uncourtly merriment, which brought on them frowns and shrugs from some of the emperor's attendants. The moment was favourable to the Jewish envoys, and they answered discreetly, *Every people has its special customs; our opponents are not without their own peculiarities. . . . Some nations,* one of them meekly suggested, *refrain from eating the flesh of young lambs. . . . Quite right too,* screamed the emperor, *their meat is bad.* Pleased with his joke, which took the Jews by surprise, he went on more mildly to inquire into the national usages of their countrymen: but when they began to address him in a set speech, explaining and justifying the principles of their polity, he soon cut them short, afraid, as Philo surmised, to listen to a justification which he should be unable to refute, and rushed back to his architectural fancies. Among the wonders before them, the envoys, terrified as they were, could not help remarking the windows of one chamber filled with a transparent stone, admitting the light but warding off the wind, and tempering the burning rays of the sun. Once more the emperor came up to

<sup>1</sup> Philo, c. 45.: *φρίκη βίβλος*.

them, and desired them, with less asperity than at first, to resume their explanations; but again he interrupted them after a few words by running off to superintend the arrangement of some pictures. The Jews continued still to follow him, more dead than alive from fear, putting in from time to time a few words of solicitation or apology, but addressing themselves all the while in silent prayer to the great God of their fathers. *He had mercy, says Philo, upon us, and turned at last the emperor's heart to pity. . . Men who think me no God, exclaimed Caius, are more unfortunate, after all, than criminal;* and with this remark he left the place and dismissed them. Though his last words were not ungracious, the Jews perceived that they had failed in the object of their mission, and returned home with heavy hearts, with no hope in the compassion or justice of man. They betook themselves to their God, and they found deliverance. The resolution indeed of the tyrant was in no wise shaken; the instances even of Agrippa, whom the Jews engaged to plead their cause, and to enforce moral with political arguments, were totally unavailing.<sup>1</sup> The orders to Petronius were repeated with increasing stringency, and every plea and pretext for delay disregarded. The Jews, stung to madness, were preparing to defend their holy place at the price of their national existence, when in a moment a blow, that might seem heaven-directed, struck down the monster, and paralysed the sacrileg. But the crimes of this semi-Oriental divinity have yet to be described more particularly, before we can rejoice as it deserves in the just retribution of his downfall.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 9. 8. According to this writer Caius at one moment yielded to Agrippa, and rescinded his orders to Petronius; but on hearing of the resistance the Jews were prepared to make, repeated them more vehemently than ever. The last missive, however, did not reach Petronius till after the news had arrived of the tyrant's death. *Comp. Tac. Hist. v. 9.*: "Jussi a Caio Cesare effigiem ejus in templo locare, arma potius sumpserunt: quæm motum Cæsaris mors diremit."

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

REFLECTIONS ON THE DEFICIENCY OF OUR MATERIALS FOR THE HISTORY OF CAIUS.—  
 DEFECTS OF HIS EDUCATION AND TRAINING.—HIS CONTEMPT FOR POLITICAL  
 DISGUISES.—THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE ARICIAN DIANA.—COLOSSAL CHARAC-  
 TER OF HIS CONCEPTIONS: HIS ARCHITECTURAL EXTRAVAGANCES.—THE VIA-  
 DUCT OVER THE VELABRUM.—THE BRIDGE OF BOATS AT RALE.—HIS EXTRAV-  
 AGANT LUXURY.—HE PRETENDS TO ELOQUENCE.—HIS SPITE AGAINST GREAT  
 REPUTATIONS, AND BELIEF IN HIS OWN DIVINITY.—SYSTEMATIC PERSECUTION  
 OF THE WEALTHY NOBLES.—MASSACRE OF EXILES.—THE PEOPLE ALIENATED  
 BY TAXATION.—HIS EXPEDITION INTO GAUL.—OVERTHROW OF LENTULUS  
 GÆTULICUS AND LEPIDUS.—PRETENDED INVASION OF BRITAIN.—RETURNING TO  
 ROME, HE PLAYS THE TRYANT WITHOUT DISGUISE.—CONSPIRACIES AGAINST  
 HIM.—HE IS SLAIN BY CASSIUS CHÆREA. (A. D. 39-41., A. U. 792-794.)

THE loss of several books of the annals of Tacitus leaves  
 us dependent for our knowledge of the domestic events  
 of the third principate on the meagre pages of  
 Dion and Suetonius. Of that immortal work,  
 every gap in which may be equally deplored as  
 a loss to history and to philosophy, four books, from the sev-  
 enth to the tenth, contained the affairs of less than ten years;  
 a larger space proportionally than the writer had allowed to  
 the details of the Tiberian administration; from whence we  
 may conclude that the later period was even more prolific  
 than the earlier in important and interesting events. If two  
 or even three of these books were appropriated, as we may  
 suppose, to the reign of Caius, many circumstances must un-  
 doubtedly have been deemed worthy of more particular con-  
 sideration than we find in the dry statements of Dion, and  
 the desultory anecdotes of the Roman biographer, and must  
 have occupied, in the thoughtful view of a wiser writer, no

The principate  
 of Caius a gap  
 in the annals of  
 Tacitus.

unimportant place in the general history of his countrymen. We may presume that in them the affairs of the Roman administration in the East (of which we now derive our information from Jewish sources only) were treated with the fulness of detail and wealth of language which became the pen of the most eloquent of historians, and with all that deep interest in the subject which must have been felt by one who had lived to witness the struggle and awful catastrophe in which they had resulted. From them we should have learnt, perhaps, the real nature of the complaints of the Alexandrians against the Jews, and have been admitted, at least, to a familiar acquaintance with the condition of the Egyptian capital, with its mixed population of surly Copts, subtle and garrulous Greeks, reserved and busy Hebrews. We should have traced, in a few burning touches never to be obliterated, the fierce unyielding character of that marvellous people, to whom, as the surest of human depositories, were committed the oracles of God. We should have received more particular details of the false and offensive statements regarding the origin of the intruders from Palestine, which circulated among their enemies, and which, as we discover from the allusion of Tacitus himself at a later period, were accepted by the Romans with the prone credulity of national exasperation.<sup>1</sup>

But more especially we might expect to have found in these lost books a judicious and temperate survey of the state of public feeling at Rome, and a comparative view of the genius of the nation as it appeared under the first and under the third princeps; with an estimate of the manifest decline of national sentiments, and decay of ancient ideas, which could render possible the existence of a tyranny Oriental in its features, a reign of abject terror and self-abasement in the centre of the Western capital, in the midst of every outward appliance of luxury and festive enjoyment. We should have seen

How Tacitus  
would have  
painted the  
emperor Calua.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 2-b.

perhaps portrayed in glowing characters the circumstance which marked the great distinction between the despotism of a Tiberius and a Caius: that the one blighted with its chill shadow the germs of national enjoyment; while the other, though far more wanton and ferocious, surrounded itself with all the most alluring forms of gaiety and voluptuousness. Above all, we should have admired the dark picture of the terrible emperor himself, drawn as Tacitus only could have drawn him, as a deified Tarquin or a crowned and sceptred Catilina. In a few striking lines he has already described him to us, such as he was in early youth, a degraded and servile dissembler, drowning all sense of honour and affection in obscene sensuality, making himself unworthy of life for mere life's sake:<sup>1</sup> in another place a single expression escaping from his pen, implies his belief in the monster's insanity;<sup>2</sup> and this no doubt is the view of his character which the complete account of his career, had it descended to us, would have brought out in full and startling relief.

The most cursory examination, indeed, of our existing authorities will show that, while they seem to vie in reciting the worst atrocities of the Caian principate, there is much in which their accounts contradict each other, and much about which a thoughtful reader is constrained to suspend his credence. Critics, accordingly, have not been wanting who, rejecting as confused and incredible the bulk of this hostile testimony, have suggested that Caius was in truth the victim of the capital and the nobility, a protector of the provinces and the popu-

Possibly some injustice has been done to the character of Caius.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 3.: "Caî turbata mens." Again, but not quite in the same sense (*Hist.* iv. 48), "Turbidas animi." Seneca, in a passage quoted above, speaks of his *insania* as sufficiently manifest. So again (*Cons. ad Polyb.* 36.), "Furiosa inconstantia." Statius, *Sylv.* iii. 3. 70. "furiis agitatus." Suetonius assures us that he was himself sensible of his infirmity, and proposed to take a course of hellebore in retirement. *Calig.* 50. His distraction of mind, his habitual fever and sleeplessness, as described by this writer, are strongly indicative of intermittent insanity.

lace, whose character was blackened with desperate malice by the animosity of partisans. Even the adverse testimony of Tacitus, they would urge, might have served, as in the case of Tiberius, to discredit some statements of his colleagues, and thus to mitigate our idea of the crimes of the object of their common hostility. It is possible we might read in the character of Caius, thus sifted by cross-examination of the adverse witnesses, an anxiety to avoid the errors of his predecessor; and that as Tiberius secluded himself from his people, and fell into the hands of an unworthy favourite, his successor may have resolved to know everything and do everything himself, to rely on no minister or adviser, but rushing unceasingly from Rome to Italy, from Italy to the provinces, to inform himself of every detail of his world-wide administration: a task to which no man was equal, least of all a sickly youth of imperfect education and unbalanced intellect,—a task which had overstrained the energy of a Julius, the sagacity of an Augustus, and the prudent industry of a Tiberius. That there was a period at the commencement of his brief principate during which there was at least a struggle between beneficent wishes and selfish inclinations, when his liberal and patriotic declarations were not consciously insincere, nor his deference to the people and senate assumed at the mere dictate of fear, cannot fairly be disputed. His activity was certainly remarkable; many of his plans of public improvement were as wise as they were bold; the vigilance of his government never relaxed; though well aware of the perils of his position, he was harassed by no craven timidity; we hear of no complaints under him of affairs neglected and foes encouraged: yet he yielded himself to no minister or favourite; he did his own work with a vehement impetuosity, no less conspicuous in the toils of administration than in the excesses of debauchery. Nevertheless, the verdict of antiquity has gone against him. The question with our imperfect lights will not bear to be reopened; and we have no other course but to join in the general condemnation pronounced upon the miserable strip-

ling, of whom the best that can be said is that the wildness of a brain, stricken in the cradle with hereditary insanity, was aggravated by the horrors of his unnatural position. Accepting the common impression of his character as on the whole sufficiently established, I shall be satisfied with pointing out, in one or two remarkable instances, the apparent misrepresentation of conduct really wise and laudable.

The men, it must be observed, who had preceded Caius in empire had all been trained to rule by long exercise, and had tested their powers in the best of schools, in  
Disadvantages  
under which he  
succeeded to  
power.
manly obedience to the circumstances which controlled them. Caius alone had inherited his autocracy without undergoing this discipline, for the mere abject servility of his submission to his uncle does not deserve the name of a moral and reasonable training. It was only for a short time that he had enjoyed any expectation of eventually succeeding, and the sole course which then offered for reaching the glittering prize was to crouch unremarked in the shadow of the emperor's footstool. He was jealously precluded from the efforts which might have helped to fit him for the arduous post before him. Such instruction as he received was confined to merely literary exercises: the habit of declamation, though ostensibly the training of a Cicero or a Demosthenes, had in fact no more bearing on real affairs than the lessons of a modern schoolboy. When we read that Caius pronounced a funeral harangue over the bier of Livia at the age of fifteen; that Augustus and Julius Cæsar, and others, performed similar feats in still tenderer years, we must consider these exertions as mere conventional themes, composed by rule and measure, and under a tutor's eye. As a scholar Caius showed some vivacity, and achieved, perhaps, some success; the remarks recorded of him in later years show natural wit and cleverness:<sup>1</sup> but there is no reason to suppose that his mind expanded by exercise and

<sup>1</sup> As, for instance, his calling Livia an *Ulysses in petticoats* ("Ulysses stolum"), and describing the style of Seneca, the philosopher, as *untempered mortar* ("arenam sine calce"). Suet. *Calig.* 23, 53.

observation, or that he ever learnt much more than what his pedagogues instilled into him.<sup>1</sup> Such talents and such accomplishments had none of the bone and muscle of true intellectual strength, and could impart no just self-reliance to the pupil, who entered almost at the same moment on manhood and on empire. There is, however, another respect in which the practical training of the earlier emperors, denied to Caius, aided in the development of their native genius for government. At this crisis in the life of the Roman people, when society, shaken to its basis, trembled on the verge of hopeless anarchy, the broad enunciation of a principle or theory of government might have overturned it in a moment. It was not for the safety of their rulers only that it was requisite to rest in practical expedients; it was much more essential to the welfare of the people that they should be kept in ignorance of the real views of their rulers, and allowed to indulge in the dream of independence, from which they derived their self-respect, and walked with firmer step and erecter carriage. If the substance of freedom was irretrievably lost, it would have been mere cynicism to strip them of the shadow which they still mistook for it, and deprive them of the last consolations of their brilliant servitude. This was the lesson which Augustus and Tiberius learnt in the school of experience, before their time arrived for applying it: but such a lesson was never impressed on the rude mind of their successor. Caius, when he found himself the master of a legion of slaves, felt neither shame nor scruple in proclaiming his own power, and exacting their devotion. He despised as ignoble the caution of his predecessors in disclaiming the full acknowledgment of their undoubted prerogatives. He regarded himself, not as a Princeps or Imperator, but as a King; and if he did not

<sup>1</sup> It must be allowed, however, that Josephus (*Antiq. Jud.* xix. 2. 5.) speaks highly of this prince's education, though he admits that it was nullified by the curse of his position: ἐπρώτευσε τε τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν πολιτῶν, οὐ μὲν ἀντισχεῖν οἶα τε ἐγένετο αὐτῷ τὰ ἐκ τῆς παιδείας συλλεγόμενα ἀγαθὰ πρὸς τὸν ἐπελθόντα δλεθρον αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τῆς ἐξουσίας.



extort from his subjects the odious title, he allowed the idea to become impressed on them by jurists and moralists; so that we may now begin to trace the dawning in the Roman mind of the theory of royal prerogative. The complete and irresponsible power he claimed over the persons and property of his people, and even the soil on which they stood, was derived neither from hereditary nor elective right: it was the prey of the strongest, which Fate had placed in his hands, and which Force only could secure to him.<sup>1</sup> His wild untutored intellect could grasp, perhaps, no higher or subtler principle of authority than this: it was ever present to his mind and harassed it with perpetual anxiety: he lived in constant oscillation between the exultation of unrestrained enjoyment and the depressing consciousness of danger: he strained his imagination to realize by the most wanton excesses the substance of unlimited power, at one moment as an excitement, at another as a relief and consolation.

Many instances are given of these excesses, to some of which the course of our narrative will compel us to refer.

Strange story  
of the priest-  
hood of the  
Arician Diana.

I mention one only in this place, which seems to illustrate, in a form which may be regarded, perhaps, as mythical rather than strictly true, the turn which the position of Caius gave to his reflections. In the dark recesses of the woods which overshadowed the lake of Nemus, stood a chapel of the Tauric Diana, whose sanguinary rites on the shores of the Cimmerian Bosphorus were remembered, though no longer practised, in the milder

<sup>1</sup> Thus, we read in Seneca, *de Benef.* vii. 4.: "Jure civili omnia Regis sunt, et tamen illa quorum ad regem pertinet universa possessio, in singulos dominos descripta sunt, et unaquæque res habet possessorem suum . . . . Ad reges potestas omnium pertinet, ad singulos proprietas." True, he is here laying down a general principle: but its applicability to the Roman polity of his day is hardly disguised. So again (vii. 6.): "Cæsar omnia habet, fiscus, ejus privata tantum ac sua; et universa in imperio ejus sunt, in patrimonio propria." (Plin. *Paneg.* 50.), praising the moderation of Trajan: "Est quod Cæsar non suum videt." Compare at a later period, Gaius, ii. 7.: "In provinciali solo dominium populi Romani est vel Cæsaris. Memento," said Caius of himself (Suet. *Calig.* 29.), "omnia mihi et in omnes licere."

clime of Latium. Nevertheless, the belief still commonly prevailed that the priest, or *king* as he was denominated, who ministered at her altar was qualified for his office by the slaughter of his predecessor, and held it only by the tenure of strength in combat or swiftness in flight against the next aspirant. Such was the legend of the shrine, which had become embodied in the poetical ritual of Ovid, and was noted even in the graver treatise of the geographer Strabo.<sup>1</sup> If so wild an usage had ever actually existed, and received the sanction of authority, we may believe that it had long fallen into desuetude. But the story rendered current by the credulity of popular antiquarians excited the curiosity and horror of the vulgar; and Caius, ever logical in his deductions, and a shrewd proscriber of all hollow pretensions, affected indignation that the actual incumbent of the office, the champion of the grove, should enjoy his dignified indolence unchallenged. He instigated, we are assured, a stronger man to seek him in his retreat, and required him to defend his preferment with his life.<sup>2</sup> We may imagine the grim satisfaction with which the imperial philosopher might reduce this theory of succession to practice. Such, at all events, was the view he took of his own position. He regarded himself, sometimes perhaps with a bitter smile, as no other than the minister of a bloody destiny, once raised to power by a deed of blood, and liable to be cast down not less suddenly by another.

The contemplation of his extraordinary position as the deified autocrat of the world, lying as it did almost beyond the verge to which a Roman's imagination could at this period extend, seems to have filled this vain creature's mind with an inward assurance,

Caius imbibes  
a notion of his  
own superior  
nature.

<sup>1</sup> Ovid, *Fast.* iii. 271.:

"Regna tenent fortesque manu pedibusque fugaces,  
Et perit exemplo postmodo quisque suo."

Comp. Strabo, v. 8. p. 239.: τὸ δ' Ἀρτεμίδιον ὃ καλοῦσι Νέμος . . . . καὶ γὰρ τι βαρβαρικὴν κρατεῖ καὶ Σκυθικὴν περὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἔθος· ξιφηγῆς οὖν ἐστὶν ἀεὶ, περισκοπῶν τὰς ἐπιθέσεις, ἔτοιμος ἀμύνεσθαι.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Cal.* 35.: "Nemorensi regi, quod multos jam annos potiretur sacerdotio, validiorem adversarium subornavit."

which he mistook perhaps for the inspiration of divinity, that he was altogether a being of different texture from the common clay of mortality. As shepherds or herdsmen differ in species from the animals they dispose of, so, he boldly argued, must the ruler of the Roman world belong to a higher and grander existence than the troop of slaves he governs.<sup>1</sup> When this conception had taken possession of him, it became his passion to realize it in every outward act; to prove to himself, to manifest to the world, that he was subject to none of the laws by which mere men are controlled; that his transcendental being was elevated above the restraints of all inferior existences; that he stood in incommunicable dignity far aloof from the ordinary sympathies of humanity: while no conception was so daring, no combination so preposterous, as to be beyond his power to execute. Thus, on the one hand, we find him taking a pride in showing himself inaccessible to the ordinary sentiment of pity, steeling himself to the sight of pain, and at last feeling, or affecting perhaps to feel, an actual pleasure in it;<sup>2</sup> exulting again in the defiance of the rules of common decency, and indulging in open shamelessness of behaviour, for the mere wanton sport of offending and horrifying his associates. It was in this spirit that he complained that his reign was signalized by no great public calamity, such as the Varian massacre, or the fall of the theatre at Fidenæ.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, he delighted in the execution of the most fantastic projects, to prove, as it would seem, that he was lord both of sea and land, and of all the powers of nature, and that nothing was too extravagant, nothing too amazing, for the deified Cæsar to effect. To stand on the summit of a lofty basilica and scatter money

<sup>1</sup> Philo, *leg. in Cui.* 11.

<sup>2</sup> It pleased him to say that he practised the *ἀδιαρπεία*, or steadfastness of the Stoics, in accustoming himself to gaze upon human suffering without blenching. Pliny remarks, as a peculiarity of this emperor's eyes, that they seldom or never winked: he calls them "*oculi rigentes*" (*H. N.* xi. 54.); but whether this was natural, or had been attained by muscular effort, he does not say.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 31.

to the populace, seemed to him an act of divine munificence; to sail along the Campanian coast in enormous galleys, equipped with porticoes, baths, and banquet halls, interspersed with gardens and orchards, delighted him as a defiance of the elements.<sup>1</sup>

We find the colossal character of this wonder-worker's conceptions running, as generally with the Roman potentates, in the direction of material constructions. *To pull down in order to re-erect, to change the square into the round*;—such, in a word, was the idea which governed the passion of the time for building, which was constantly projecting the bay of the tribune from the flat wall of the basilica, replacing the oblong temple of Greece with the circular dome-vaulted Pantheon, and turning the arch, the genuine invention of native art, to support story above story, and rear Antiochs and Alexandrias upon the area of Rome. To build was to create, and to create was divine. Fired with the persuasion of his august divinity, Caius rioted in the number and magnificence of his architectural undertakings. He completed the temple of Augustus, which Tiberius had left unfinished, and effected the repair or restoration of the theatre of Pompeius, which had suffered by an accidental conflagration, while he commenced an amphitheatre of his own on the site of the Septa in the Campus.<sup>2</sup> The great aqueduct which conveyed the waters of the Aqua Claudia to Rome, together with those of the Anio Novus, which were conducted in a separate channel above them, was also designed by Caius, though the work was far too gigantic to be accomplished during his short tenure of power. The furthest point from which these streams were carried was more than fifty-six miles from the city; but for a distance of nearly ten miles the channel was suspended on an unbroken series of arches, which in some places ex-

Colossal conceptions of Caius: his architectural extravagances.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 37.: "Nihil tam efficere concupiscebat quàm quod posse effici negaretur."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 21.: "Opera sub Tiberio semiperfecta . . . absolvit."

ceeded an hundred feet in height.<sup>1</sup> This was reputed in every respect the greatest of all the fine works of this kind executed at Rome; and however needless and extravagant may have been the ostentation displayed in its method of construction, we must not fail to admire the utility of its design. Several works are enumerated which Caius projected for the decoration of the provinces, but of these none perhaps were completed, nor indeed did they deserve to be so;<sup>2</sup> unless we except one of a different kind, the cutting of the Isthmus of Corinth, the expediency of which is so manifest, that it is much to be wondered that among the many projectors who designed, none ever succeeded in effecting it. It is hardly possible to give serious credit to one of the plans ascribed to him, that of building a city in the passes of the Alps. It seems more reasonable to suspect that the people chose thus to caricature some scheme of beneficence, such, for instance, as the establishment of a hospice in the wilderness of snows.<sup>3</sup> The creation of harbours of refuge at Rhegium and on the opposite coast of Sicily for the corn ships which encountered the perils of the Messanian straits was worthy of a prudent government; but though designed and begun, the undertaking languished for lack of funds, and was never completed.<sup>4</sup> The enlargement of the palace of Caius. the palace of the Cæsars was a freak of Oriental extravagance. From the northern angle of the Palatine hill where the modest residence of Augustus had overlooked the forum, Caius extended a series of chambers and arcades to the valley beneath, and made the temple of Castor and Pollux serve as a vestibule to the imperial abode. The emperor, it is said, would frequently take his stand between the statues of the twin deities, the guardians of the city, and thus ex-

<sup>1</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 24. 10.; Frontinus, *de Aquæduct*, 13, 14.; Becker, *Röm. Alterth.* i. 704.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. l. c.: "Destinaverat et Sami Polycratis regiam restituere, Miletî Didymeum peragere." Com. Dion, lix. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. l. c.: "In Alpium jugo urbem condere."

<sup>4</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 2. 5.

hibit himself for the adoration of the passers by. But he affected to converse with Jupiter himself, enshrined in the temple of the Capitol, and for this purpose he required a readier means of access to the sacred mount.

Accordingly he carried a viaduct from the Palatine to the Capitoline, a bold construction, suspended above the buildings of the Velabrum, and designed, we may suppose, to rival the bridge over the Tyropœum at Jerusalem, one of the chief wonders of the Eastern metropolis, of which he had often loved to hear.<sup>1</sup>

His viaduct  
across the Ve-  
labrum.

That so vast a structure should have been flung boldly across so wide and deep a gorge, and completed within the space of two or three years, may excite our wonder, and almost stagger our belief, yet it may seem still more astonishing that every remnant and vestige of it should have been swept entirely away. It is probable indeed, that this demolition was consummated within a few years after the first completion of the edifice. But this is only one out of many instances of the promptness with which the great Roman builders overthrew whatever stood in the way of newer and generally still grander designs, and transferred the enormous piles of hewn materials to fresh and often very different destinations. The most remarkable and renowned, however, of this emperor's creations was constructed of far less solid materials, and never intended perhaps to serve any other than a temporary purpose. If we may believe the accounts we have received from various authors, the great bridge of boats which Caius threw across the Baian Gulf from Bauli to Puteoli was a freak of

His bridge  
across the  
Gulf of Bala.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 22.: "Super templum Augusti ponte transmisso Palatium Capitoliumque conjunxit." The site of this temple is not known, but it may very well have been at the foot of the Palatine and of the house of Augustus. The width of the valley from crest to crest is above two hundred yards. Pliny takes occasion from this junction of one quarter of the city with another to say, with a bold perversion of language, that Caius surrounded Rome with his palace: "Bis vidimus urbem totam cingi domibus principum Cali et Nerónis." *Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 24. 5.

insane vanity, the most extravagant toy, perhaps, that human folly ever invented to sport with one day and cast away the next. Between Baiæ and Bauli, on the western side of this celebrated bay, a spit of land projects a few hundred yards into the sea towards the opposite point of Puteoli, about two miles distant; and this is also nearly the depth of the arc defined by these two prominent headlands. From Puteoli, on the other hand, a mole advanced into the water, built upon arches, the remains of which extend twelve hundred feet; and thus there existed on either side of the bay the rudiments, the one natural the other artificial, of a complete mole or breakwater. It was by a parallel mound or bank at the bottom of this bay that the sea was excluded from the Lucrine Lake and the Avernus beyond it. The great work of Agrippa, who converted this lake into a haven by perforating the mound with a ship-canal, has been noticed in an earlier chapter. It was not beyond the means, nor above the bold conception, of a wise and paternal ruler to improve on this political masterpiece, by the construction of a mole, vast, indeed, as its dimensions must have been both in length and depth, at the entrance of the outer gulf. Such was the principle of the works effected by the steadfast energy of a later emperor, which still exist at Civita Vecchia or Centumcellæ; and the great amount of shipping which must have been often assembled at Puteoli, as well as the importance of its cargoes, might have justified the expense and grandeur of such an undertaking. But no such purpose can be ascribed to Caius; his object was as selfish as the means he employed were showy and unsubstantial. The ancient legends of the bay ascribed the dyke of the Lucrine, a broad shingle-bank thrown up in the course of ages by the sea, to the creative power of Hercules; and the ambition to vie with the man-god was more powerful with the self-styled divinity, who affected to rival him, than any magnificent conceptions of imperial policy. He ransacked, we are told, the havens far and near to collect every vessel he could lay hands on, till commerce was straitened in every quarter, and Italy itself threatened

with famine. These vessels he yoked together side by side, in a double line, extending from one shore to the other.<sup>1</sup> On this broad and well-compacted base he placed an enormous platform of timber; this again he covered with earth, and paved, after the manner of a military highroad, with stones hewn and laid in cement. The way thus *built* was furnished with numerous stations or post-houses, for the use of which fresh water was conveyed by an aqueduct from the continent.<sup>2</sup> Such, it seems, was this extraordinary bridge: it could never have been intended to retain it permanently; it was doubtless necessary to restore the vessels which had been pressed into the service of the prince's vanity; but he determined before abandoning his work to enact on it a peculiar pageant, the novelty and brilliancy of which should transcend every recorded phantasy of kings or emperors.<sup>3</sup> The venerable seer Thrasyllus had prophesied, it seems, at an earlier period, that the young Caius would no more become emperor than he would ever drive his chariot across the gulf of Baiæ.<sup>4</sup> Caius had indeed attained to power, yet the words might still ring ominously in his ears; pride and superstition com-

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lix. 17.: ἀφ' οὐπερ καὶ λιμὸς ἐν τε τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ καὶ ἐν Ρώμῃ μάλιστα ἰσχυρὸς ἐγένετο. We may be allowed to suspect that this statement is founded upon a remark of Seneca which will hardly bear it out. *De Brev. Vit.* 18.: "Dum ille pontes navibus jungit, et viribus imperii ludit, aderat . . . alimentorum egestas. Exitio pæne et fame constitit . . . superbi regis imitatio." But the scarcity he speaks of occurred at the moment of Caius's death, which was two years later, when there was found, it was said, to be no more than seven or eight days' consumption of corn in the granaries.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 19.; Dion, lix. 17.; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 1. The first makes the length 3800 paces, the second 26 stades, the last 30 stades; but the real distance is about two miles.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. l. c.: "Novum atque inauditum genus spectaculi excogitavit." Eumenius (*Panegy. in Constant.* 18.) alludes to this pageant, which he calls, in his courtly language, "Delicata vectatio principis otiosi." Clinton. *Fest. Rom.* App. p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Suet. l. c.: "Non magis Caium imperaturum quam per Baianum sinum equis discursurum." The author tells us that he had as a boy heard his grandfather mention this, as supposed in the palace to have been the real motive for this whimsical undertaking.



bined, perhaps, to urge him on, and he declared that he would drive across the bay, not alone in his chariot, but attended by an army, and arrayed as an emperor indeed. The great world of Rome mustered on the shores around to witness the imperial miracle. From Puteoli to Misenum the semicircle of the bay was crowded with admiring multitudes; the loungers of the baths and porticoes sallied forth from their cool retreats; the promenaders of the Lucrine beach checked their palanquins and chariots, and hushed the strains of their delicious symphonies; the terraces of the gorgeous villas which lined the coast, and breasted the fresh and sparkling ripple, glittered with streamers of a thousand colours, and with the bright array of senators and matrons, drowning the terrors which day and night beset them in shrieks of childish acclamation. The clang of martial music echoed from shore to shore. From Bauli the emperor descended upon the bridge,—having first sacrificed to the gods, and chiefly to Neptune and Envy,—arrayed in a coat of mail adorned with precious gems, which had been worn by Alexander the Great, with his sword by his side, his shield on his arm, and crowned with a chaplet of oak-leaves.<sup>1</sup> On horseback, followed by a dense column of soldiers, he traversed the solid footway, and charged into Puteoli as a conquering foe. There he indulged his victorious army with a day of rest and expectation. On the morrow he placed himself in a triumphal car, and drove back exulting, in the garb of a charioteer of the Green at the games of the Circus. The mock triumph was adorned by pretended captives, represented by some royal hostages from Parthia, at the time in custody of the Roman government. The army followed in long procession. In the centre of the bridge the emperor halted, and addressed an

<sup>1</sup> Suet. Dion, ll. cc. These sacrifices seem hardly in accordance with Caius's character, but that to Livor or Envy is perhaps significant in connexion with Hercules:

“Diram qui contudit Hydram . . . .  
Comperit *invidiam* supremo fine domari.”

Hor. *Epist.* ii. 2. 10

harangue to his soldiers on the greatness of their victory, from a tribunal erected for the purpose. He contrasted the narrow stream of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, at most seven stades in width, with the broad ocean which he had yoked in chains, and declared that the exploits of Xerxes and Darius were trifles compared with his mightier enterprise.<sup>1</sup> After wearying both himself and his hearers with this prodigious folly, he distributed money among them, and invited them to a banquet. At this entertainment the emperor retained his place on the bridge, but the soldiers were collected around him for the most part in vessels. It extended far into the night, and at nightfall the bridge and the ships were illuminated with torches, and at the signal the whole curving line of coast shone forth, as in a theatre, with innumerable lights.<sup>2</sup> Charmed with the stillness of the water, and the brilliancy reflected upon it, the populace crowded round in boats, and partook of the mirth and festivity. But their holiday did not end without a frightful disaster, many of the spectators in the boats or on the bridge being jostled accidentally into the waves. Those who fell, and those who might have saved them, were, it seems, equally intoxicated; the light was uncertain; no one gave, or none received orders; and the emperor himself, we are

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that there should be no allusions to this exploit in Pliny or the poets, to whom it might often have furnished an apt illustration; as, for instance, when Juvenal says;

"Quidquid *Græcia mendax*

Andet in historia, cum stratum classibus idem  
Suppositumque rotis solidum mare." x. 174.

or Lucan:

"Tales fama canit tumidum super sequora Xerxem  
Contruxisse vias, *multum cum pontibus ausus*  
Europamque Asia, Bastonque admovit Abydo."

*Phars.* ii. 672.

<sup>2</sup> The description of Dion is more than usually vivid: τοῦ γὰρ χωρίου ἀναραιοῦς ὄντος, πῦρ πανταχόθεν, καθάπερ ἐν θεάτρῳ τινί, ἐδείχθη, ὥστε μηδεμίαν αἰσθήσεν τοῦ σκότ' ἢ γενέσθαι· καὶ γὰρ τὴν νύκτα ἡμέραν, ὥσπερ τοῦ τῆς ἀέλλαςαν γῆν, ποιῆσαι ἠθέλησεν. lix. 17.

told, was overcome with wine: whether drunk or sober, it is not impossible that he enjoyed the horror of the scene, and even forbade assistance to be rendered to the sufferers.<sup>1</sup>

Among the tasteless extravagances of the day there was none to which the vulgar rich more commonly devoted themselves than that of the table. It was not so much their ambition to surround themselves with the most graceful or gorgeous appliances of luxury, with richly furnished chambers, with exquisite music, with couches and tables of costly materials and elaborate workmanship, though all these too had their votaries, as to amaze their guests with the extraordinary money value of the articles they managed to consume. It was for their rarity only that nightingales and peacocks, and the tongue and brain of phoenixes, whatever these creatures may be, could be regarded as delicacies; still less could it give any pleasure to the palate to swallow pearls dissolved in powerful acids. But such was the rampant luxury of Caius, in which he strove to imitate or rather to outdo the Oriental Cleopatra. In this and other particulars of the same kind he succeeded probably in surpassing all previous examples: he contrived, we are assured, to expend the amount of eighty thousand pounds sterling on a single repast; and having effected this, he could say complacently, *a man should be frugal, except he be a Cæsar*.<sup>2</sup> This vehement ambition to be the first in everything he deigned to undertake, extended

Extravagant  
luxury of the  
table.

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius says plainly (*Calig.* 32.): "Quam multos e litore invitasset ad se, repente omnes præcipitavit. Quosdam gubernacula apprehendentes, contis remisque detrusit in mare." But according to Dion the intoxication was general: ἐμπλησθεὶς δὲ καὶ ὑπερκορῆς καὶ σίτου καὶ μέθης γενόμενος, συχνοὺς μὲν τῶν ἐταίρων ἐς τὴν θάλασσαν ἀπὸ τῆς γαβύρας ἔρριψε, συχνοὺς δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀλλῶν ἐν πλοίοις ἐμβόλους ἔχουσι παραπλέοντας κατέδουσε, ὥστε καὶ ἀπολέσθαι τινὰς· οἱ γὰρ πλείους καί περ μεθύοντες, ἐσώθησαν.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 37.: "Aut frugi esse hominem oportere aut Cæsarem." Comp. Senec. *Cons. ad Helv.* 9, 11. The famous epicure Apicius, in the reign of Tiberius, was said to have devoured in his career of good living an hundred millions of sesterces, or 800,000*l.*, and to have put an end to his life when he found that he had only ten millions, or 80,000*l.*, left.

to many unworthy objects besides gluttony and charioteering. It was a little better directed when the Cæsar presented himself before the senate or the tribunals as an orator, and made perhaps some effort of mind and understanding to deserve the acclamations which were only too sure to follow. On one occasion, at least, a man who had unfortunately incurred his displeasure was saved by sacrificing his own reputation as a speaker to the vanity of his imperial antagonist.<sup>1</sup> But even the victims of tyranny might not always show such forbearance towards it, and Caius, in the midst of the applause with which his genius was greeted, must have frequently felt mortification at the real hollowness of his pretensions. His passion for fame degenerated, as might be expected in so base and selfish a nature, into a brutal envy of the fame of others, and a passion for destroying every well-earned reputation. He caused, we are told, the statues of the heroes of the republic, which Augustus had set up in the Campus, to be overthrown and broken, so that the names could not be restored to the figures they belonged to;<sup>2</sup> after which he issued a decree, which itself was not perhaps unreasonable, though opposed to the most cherished customs of antiquity, that no statue of a living man should be erected, at least without a special authorization from the chief of the state. He proceeded, however, with still baser spite to deprive the images of illustrious houses of the insignia by which they were distinguished; as, for instance, the Cincinnati of their ringlets, and the Torquati of their golden collars. He forbade the last collateral descendant of the great Pompeius to bear the surname of Magnus; nor would he allow the modest worth of Agrippa to be honoured by placing his effigies, as in the Pantheon and elsewhere, by the

Caius affects to be an orator.

His spite against great reputations of various kinds.

<sup>1</sup> See the story of Domitius Afer in Dion, lix. 19.: ἀπέπειε μὲν οὐδέν οὐδὲ ἀπελογήσατο, θανυμάζειν δὲ δὴ καὶ καταπεκλήχθαι τὴν δεινότητ᾽ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Γαίου προσποιούμενος . . . ἐπὶναι.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. Calig. 34.: "Ut restitui salvis titulis non potuerint."

side of those of Augustus.<sup>1</sup> Descended himself from this plebeian statesman, he resented his origin as degrading to a Cæsar, and let it be understood that he was actually the grandson of Augustus, through an incestuous commerce with the unhappy Julia.<sup>2</sup> He heaped his insensate injuries not less basely on another description of greatness, in commanding the works of Virgil and Livy to be removed from the libraries; for the one, he said, had neither genius nor learning, the other was a negligent blunderer.<sup>3</sup> He even threatened to abolish the immortal songs of Homer. *Plato expelled the father of fiction from his state; why, he asked, should not I from mine?* With such principles of conduct, or rather with such impulses, it might be expected that the tyrant would deride with a sneer the curious labours of the jurists, and accordingly, we are told, that he proposed not only to abolish the institution of the jurisconsults, but even threatened to annul every existing canon in Rome and throughout the empire, and make his own word and will the sole measure of law to mankind.<sup>4</sup>

Such were the passionate freaks by which this infatuated being strove to realize to himself the omnipotence which he claimed. In the strange perverted state of religious conceptions at the period, I see no reason to doubt that Caius was really possessed with a vague notion of his own divinity.<sup>5</sup> The gods of those days,

Caius really impressed with a notion of his own divinity.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 23.; Dion, ix. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* l. c.

<sup>3</sup> In this, as in other cases, it seems not impossible that the extravagance imputed to Caius is a blind or wilful perversion of his enemies. A deficiency of invention in Virgil and of accuracy in Livy may surely be admitted by emperor or author without the imputation of unworthy jealousy.

<sup>4</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 34.; Philo, *leg. ad Cai.* 17.: νόμον γὰρ ἡγοῦμενος ταυτὸν, τοὺς τῶν ἐκασταρχοῦ νομοθετῶν ὡς κενὰς βήσεις ἔλκεν.

<sup>5</sup> Hoeck, who only wants the faculty of imagination to be an historian of a high class, cannot comprehend the fact of this belief. I am sensible how imperfect is my account of the phenomenon, but I feel no difficulty in crediting it:

“Nihil est quod credere de se  
Non possit cum laudatur Dīs æqua potestas.”

Juvenal, iv. 70.

if they did not actually touch the earth, flitted, at least, very near to its surface. To partake in some sense or other of the godhead was the dream of philosophers as well as the boast of tyrants. Nor was Caius capable of that lofty irony with which Augustus or Tiberius could look with complacent scorn on the flatteries of vulgar courtiers. It was not difficult to persuade him of the truth of that which all around him asserted; nor had he sufficient power of reasoning, when any misgiving of the fact obtruded itself, to analyse the idea of divinity, and compare his humanity with it. This is far from the same thing as a conviction of the fact itself. Caius, we may suppose, was, from the feeble constitution of his mind, incapable of a steadfast conviction, or of grasping truth at all. His intellect was passively recipient in such matters: he imbibed the notions suggested to him, and if occasionally he sported with them in the exuberance of his levity, we are not to suppose that he scornfully disbelieved the character with which the world had invested him. The divinity, indeed, which he affected was something very different from the moral inspiration claimed by his predecessors. It was all outward and sensuous. In his passion for scenic representation, he delighted to array himself in the garb of Hercules or Bacchus, or even of Juno and Venus, to brandish the club or the thyrsus, or disguise himself in a female headdress, and enact the part of the deity in the temples or in his private apartments.<sup>1</sup> Whatever god he affected to be, the senate and people shouted vehemently around him, with the admiration of spectators in a theatre rather than the reverence of worshippers.

Our accounts of the principate of Caius have not generally preserved the regular order of events. The building of the bridge is placed by Dion, our only annalist, in 792, and it is probable that the triumphal show was exhibited in the spring of that year. This era is important, as marking apparently the final exhaustion of the ordinary revenues of the state, which sank under this wild

Systematic  
persecution of  
the nobles.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lix. 26.

paroxysm of extravagance, and required a new development of tyranny to recruit them. From this period we may date the confirmed and systematic persecution of the rich nobility, which gave this reign, notwithstanding all the fair promise of its commencement, a bad pre-eminence in crime in the eyes of the senate. Hitherto, amidst all his follies or atrocities, Caius had continued still to wear the mask with which he had begun his career, and professed to abominate the conduct of his predecessor and to abjure his policy. The creatures of the Tiberian government, those especially who had made themselves detested by delation, were still in disgrace; and the vituperation of the late emperor, in which many tongues were now heard to indulge, had been regarded as a passport to favour with his successor. The senate continued to indulge in this delusion to the last; until Caius, resolved to repair his fortunes by a course of prosecution and confiscation, and to revive in all its horrors the application of the law of majesty, ventured to introduce his new policy by an open panegyric on the ruler he had so lately denounced. If we are to believe the historian, he did not pretend to the grace of consistency. *I am Emperor*, he exclaimed, to the amazement of his auditors, *and I may say one thing to-day and the contrary to-morrow: but it is not for you, citizens and subjects, to assail the memory of him who was once your chief*. He then proceeded to enumerate the persons who had perished under Tiberius, and showed or pretended to show that, in almost every case, they had been the victims of the senate rather than of the emperor; some had accused them, others had borne false witness against them, all had combined in voting for their destruction. *Moreover*, he continued, with pitiless logic, *if Tiberius was in fault, you should not have decreed him honours in his lifetime, or having done so, you should not after his death have annulled them*. *You it was, senators*, he exclaimed, *who swelled the pride of Sejanus by your flatteries, and then destroyed the monster you had yourselves created*. *You wronged your prince; you mur-*

Caius eulogizes  
the government  
of Tiberius.

*dered his minister: I can look for no good at your hands. And then he went on to introduce the prosopopœia of Tiberius himself, addressing him, approving of all he had said, and recommending him to love none of them, nor to spare any: for they all hate you, they all wish for your death, and they will kill you if they can. Then look not to pleasing them, nor care for what they say of you; but care only for your own will and pleasure, and provide, as is meet and right, for your own august safety.* At the end of this wild harangue Caius ordained that the laws of majesty should be again enforced, and that they should be graven afresh on brazen tablets. The senate and people trembled, we are told, alike at the visions of terror which were opened to them. The fathers were at first struck dumb and could make no reply; the next day they met together again to pay servile court to the tyrant. They lauded his speech as a monument of truth and regard to his uncle's memory, thanked him for his mercy in pardoning them and suffering them still to live, and decreed that his august words should be recited annually in their hearing, and sacrifices performed to the imperial clemency. To these compliments were added the more ordinary honours of a golden statue, a choral festival, and an ovation.<sup>1</sup>

It is hardly possible to resist the impression that these proceedings have been represented to us in a grotesque caricature; nor is that impression diminished when we come to examine the details of the persecution which followed. Yet there is a certain consistency in the ghastly banter which equally in the pages of Dion and Seutonius, of Josephus and Philo, forms the peculiar feature in the character of this tyrant among his kindred. The Romans were astounded at the deposition of their consuls from office for neglecting, so little even yet had the etiquette of royalty been established among them, to ordain a festival on the anniversary of the emperor's birthday. They were still more scandalized at three days being suffered

Bantering  
humour pec-  
uliar to Caius.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lxx. 16.



to pass without the appointment of their successors, and the republic being left for that interval without its highest magistrates.<sup>1</sup> It seems, however, that Caius assigned another motive for the disgrace of these consuls. They had kept holiday for the victory of Augustus over Antonius. Now Augustus was the grandfather of the emperor's mother Agrippina; but on the other hand, Antonius bore the same relation to his father Germanicus; and we are told that he had whimsically declared beforehand, that, whether they mourned or feasted on the occasion, he would convict them equally of treason.<sup>2</sup> Even when the cupidity of the ever-needy despot demanded the blood of the wealthiest senators, he could still make sport of his own tyranny. Thus we read that when, on the condemnation and death of Junius Priscus, his wealth was found to fall much below the amount anticipated, the emperor affected to regret that his victim had deceived him, and thrown away his own life through want of candour. The condemnation at this time of L. Annæus Seneca, distinguished at a later period as one of the chief of Roman philosophers, seems to show that he had become already noted for the riches which have thrown some slur on his reputation as a teacher of wisdom. He was saved by the assurance conveyed by a friend that he was already far advanced in a decline, and that his possessions might soon be grasped with-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 26.: "Consulibus oblitis de natali suo edicere abrogavit magistratum, suisque triduo sine summa potestate respublica."

<sup>2</sup> Dion (lix. 20.) places this event under the year 792. Caius commenced it as consul with L. Apronius. He laid down the office himself after thirty days, and was succeeded by Sanquinus. Apronius held the office six months. It does not appear who were the unfortunate consuls who suffered from this frolic. One of them put himself to death from mortification; but, as Caius's birthday was August 31., and the battle of Actium Sept. 2., we must conclude that the deposition took place in September. Dion goes on to say that Caius hereupon resumed the consulship, abolished the Comitia, and appointed Domitius Afer his colleague. But as he went into Gaul, as we shall see, this same year with the avowed object of engaging in a campaign, for which the season must have been very far advanced in October, the story is liable to some suspicion.

out even the trouble of a prosecution. Caius had devised various means for drawing into his coffers the estates of the rich nobles on their deaths. In this case the accused was allowed, perhaps, to compound for life by bequeathing his property to the emperor, and sacrificing on the altar of his Clemency. It is to this insatiable cupidity that <sup>Massacre of the</sup> we may, perhaps, ascribe an act of cruelty, which, <sup>exiles.</sup> as it is represented to us, seems such a mere ferocious caprice that we should hesitate to believe it of any but a confirmed madman. I can only give the story in the words of Philo, and leave it to the reader to form his own conclusions upon it. *Caius, they say, lying one night sleepless, began to think of the noble exiles in the islands, and how, though nominally suffering pains and penalties, they were actually enjoying a life of ease, quiet, and luxury. "What sort of exile," he said to himself, "is this foreign sojourn of theirs, revelling as they do in abundance of all good things, and living in a pleasant retirement the lives of true philosophers?" And thereupon he issued orders to put the most illustrious of them to death, Flaccus, the late prefect of Alexandria, being first on the list.* It would seem at least from this anecdote, as has been elsewhere intimated, that the ordinary condition of the exiles was one of considerable indulgence, and that they were allowed the enjoyment of their fortunes. That the emperor should have caused some of the wealthiest to be executed upon very trifling pretexts in order to seize on their possessions seems only too probable.<sup>1</sup>

But the spendthrift put no curb on his lavish prodigality, and his necessities became more and more urgent continually. Had he limited his demands <sup>The populace alienated by taxation.</sup> for plunder to the class of the wealthy aristoc-

<sup>1</sup> Philo, in *Flacc.* sub fin. Comp. Dion, lxx. 18. and Suet. *Calig.* 28., who gives a still finer point to the story. "Revocatum quendam a vetere exilio sciscitatus, quidnam ibi facete consuesset, respondente eo per adulationem, Deos semper oravi ut, quod evenit, periret Tiberius et tu imperares; opinans sibi quoque exules suos mortem imprecari, misit circum insulas qui universos contrucidarent."

racy, he might have still retained the favour of the populace, on whose amusements so much of his ill-gotten riches was expended ; but when, in order to provide a more certain and constant flow of gold into his coffers, he ventured to smite the mass of the citizens with new or increased taxation, he converted the whole Roman people into an enemy, and stood thenceforth naked in the eyes of history, without friend or apologist. The conquering nation, whatever else it had lost, still retained an excessive jealousy of taxation, which it blindly confounded with tribute. It was still the privilege of the Roman, whatever other distinctions he had surrendered, to be exempt from the most direct imposts. It was still the fiction of the commonwealth that the Roman paid in personal service the contribution for the support of his empire, which was commuted to the subject for money. But in fact, at this time, the citizen was using every endeavour to escape both from one burden and the other, and the light taxation which Augustus had already imposed upon him barely compensated for the general relaxation of his civil and military obligations. It might have been the wish of a wise and benevolent ruler to equalize the burdens of the empire by bringing Italy under the same fiscal yoke as the provinces. But neither Augustus nor Tiberius had ventured to levy custom on the commerce or productions of that favoured spot ; and the decree by which Caius now imposed a rate on imports at the harbours on the coast, and at the gates of the cities in the interior, and even of Rome itself, must be taken as a token of caprice or tyranny rather than of an equitable intelligence. Yet it might not be unreasonable to suppose that the fees he exacted from suitors before the tribunals were intended to improve the position of the judges, and render the course of justice more pure ; and even the tax he is said to have levied upon prostitution may have been meant as a measure of policy and outward decorum. It is easy to understand the outcry it would raise and the gross charges it might suggest against the emperor

himself.<sup>1</sup> It was believed that, among less innocent contrivances for raising his revenues, he had actually succeeded in making gold, of excellent quality, but so little in quantity as not to defray the expense of the manufacture.<sup>2</sup> It is not improbable that he attained the same end by debasing the currency.<sup>3</sup> The delight with which he contemplated the gold he thus amassed was represented as something monstrous and insane: at times it was affirmed he would cause it to be spread in heaps upon the floor, and wade in it with bare feet, or fling himself down and roll frantically upon it.<sup>4</sup> Whatever favour he may have once enjoyed with the populace from the splendour of the shows with which he indulged them,—a favour which was already, perhaps, beginning to wane from satiety, and even from disgust,—it was speedily swallowed up in feelings of indignation and resentment. The universal selfishness which he had so long pampered turned in a mass against him. The citizens refused to obey in the theatre his signal to applaud or to condemn: they beheld with indifference the feats of the imperial athlete himself; the shows and games, which they had regarded almost as their daily food, ceased at last to attract them;<sup>5</sup> and it was probably in vexation at this sullen yet passive disobedience, which baffled both his menaces and caresses, that he uttered his well-known exclamation, accompanied no doubt with the significant gesture by which he intimated his cruel will to his headsmen, *Would that the people of Rome had but one neck!*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 40.

<sup>2</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Thus we find that, "Emptum plus minus asse Caiano," was an expression for anything particularly worthless. Stat. *Sylv.* iv. 9. 22. The copper coinage of Caius was called in by his successor. Dion, ix. 22: <sup>4</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 42.

<sup>5</sup> We shall the less wonder at the self-restraint on their part if we accept literally the story of Suetonius, that he amused himself sometimes by causing the awning in the circus to be withdrawn, and forbidding the scorched spectators from retiring. It must be remembered, however, that as the circus was never more than partially veiled, a large portion of the multitude must have always been exposed to the heat of the sun. Suet. *Calig.* 26.

<sup>6</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 30. 32. Comp. Senec. *Apocolocynt.* 6. "Gestu illo solutæ manus . . . quo decollare homines solebat."

We may place the mummery of the Baian triumph in the spring or early summer of 792, the season when the Campanian coast was most thronged with lounging and gazing multitudes, and which on that account would most probably be chosen for the emperor's grand act of self-glorification. This, we are told, was promptly followed by the fiercest access of his tyranny and the increasing exactions which his empty treasury required. But nearly at the same moment Caius,—I follow now implicitly the accounts we have received,—pretended to have a nobler object in view. On making a progress to the Clitumnus, two or three days' journey from Rome, in the autumn of the same year, he remarked how slender was the number of his escort of Batavian horsemen, and the thought came suddenly into his head that the battalion might be recruited by a successful incursion into the German territories. He announced that the barbarians were encroaching on the Roman frontiers, and required his powerful arm to check them; but his mind was filled at once with visions of the sums he might extort from the provincials both of Gaul and Spain, to replenish his coffers, and slake his craving thirst for gold. From the Clitumnus, accordingly, he set out, apparently without even returning to Rome; the legions and auxiliaries he required for his expedition were directed with all speed to follow. For his own part his march was irregular and intermittent; sometimes so rapid that his guards could hardly keep up with him, even though they laid their colours on the backs of their animals; sometimes, again, so tardy and deliberate that he was borne himself on men's shoulders, and the cities through which he was to pass were required to sweep the roads and lay the dust before him.<sup>1</sup> He was attended throughout by a train of players and gladiators, dancers and women, the vile retinue of a Parthian

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius (*Calig.* 43.) speaks of this expedition as a sudden thought, which is quite consistent with the character before us. Dion (*lix.* 21.) differs upon this and other minor points; but in general the two accounts agree remarkably.

sovereign. On reaching the camp on the Rhine, he displayed his sense of discipline by animadverting severely on the officers whose contingents were slow in arriving at head quarters: some whose term of service was on the point of expiring, he degraded, on the pretext of their age and infirmities, and reduced the pay or pensions of the veterans to one half of the sum guaranteed them.<sup>1</sup> But after all there was no enemy to chastise; and the young warrior devised the expedient of sending a few captives across the river, and placing them in concealment, while the alarm was sounded in the prætorium that the foe was at hand. Thereupon, rising hastily from table with his guests, he galloped, attended by a few body-guards only, into the wood, dispersed the pretended adversaries, plucked some branches from the trees, and suspended on them the trophies of his victory: then returning, he upbraided the legions which had lagged behind, and rewarded his companions with a new kind of military chaplet, in which the sun, moon, and stars were represented, and to which he gave the name of *the crown exploratory*. But enough of this mummary. The pretended victory, we are told, was duly notified in a laurelled letter to the senate; and the fathers were petulantly upbraided for indulging in their banquets, their baths and theatres, while their emperor was exposing his august person to the darts of the barbarians. At the same time the submission of a fugitive prince from Britain was accepted and blazoned forth as the capitulation of the whole island.

To me indeed it seems impossible to mistake the spirit of caricature in which these accounts are written; and even had we no clue to a better understanding of the circumstances, I should be little disposed to confide in them. But it will be remembered how, towards the close of the reign of Tiberius, the command of the legions on the Rhine was left by him reluctantly in the hands of a chief whom he had not the courage to dis-

Explanation of  
the foregoing  
narrative.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 44.

possesa. Lentulus Gætulicus had defied the emperor, and the emperor had succumbed to his menaces. Tiberius was old and timid, and satisfied perhaps that the obedience of the legions would at least last his own time: but Caius partook neither of his fears nor his confidence. The relaxation of discipline by this legate had given occasion to attacks on the part of the Germans. But it was much more dangerous to the imperator, as a token of independence on the part of his own officer; and it was with the bold determination, as I conceive, to put down this rising spirit, that Caius, under pretence of defending the frontiers, left Rome for Gaul, to defend himself and his imperial authority. In daring Caius was not deficient; perhaps he had not sense enough fairly to estimate the dangers which beset him. But at such a crisis daring was the best wisdom, and the apparition of the redoubted emperor in the midst of a disaffected camp, together with some examples of sternness, which showed that he was not to be trifled with, may have actually saved the state from a bloody and bootless revolution.

The senators, in the tyrant's absence, to return to the narrative before us, were indulging in a happy respite from their troubles, and had willingly offered vows in the temples for every success he could desire, and recommended the provinces to follow their example.<sup>1</sup> As the season drew to a close Caius repaired to Lugdunum, the spot from which Augustus and Germanicus had directed the administration of the country, and conducted its census. From hence he issued requisitions to the cities for extraordinary contributions, and devised methods of extorting money from the nobles. Offences against the state were investigated and multiplied, and punishment only redeemed by the payment of heavy fines. So well was he satisfied, it would

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 45. Philo, alluding to these religious ceremonies, describes them not as thanksgivings for victories gained, but as vows for future successes. *Comp. leg. ad Cai.* in a passage already referred to (c. 45.): *καὶ γὰρ ἐθίσταμεν . . . say the Jewish envoys . . . πρῶτον μὲν . . . τρίτον δὲ, κατὰ τῆς ἐλπίδα τῆς Γερμανικῆς νίκης.*

seem, by these experiments of the actual riches of his Gaulish subjects, that he conceived an extraordinary plan for diverting a large portion of them, with little risk or trouble, into his coffers. Orders were despatched to Rome to transmit to Lugdunum the costly furniture and decorations of some of the imperial residences. These it was determined to sell by auction, and it was expected that the vanity of the admiring natives would induce them to pay profusely for objects of such peculiar interest. The precious goods arrived, transported by innumerable carriages and beasts of burden, the requisition for which sufficed for a time to cripple the industry of Italy; and Caius himself, as auctioneer, explained and eulogized the several articles, and urged his courtiers to bid warmly against each other. *This, he said, is a vase or statue which Antonius sent from Egypt; that is a gem or picture which Augustus brought with him from the East; this was a trophy of my father's; this was a trinket of my mother's.*<sup>1</sup> Such a recommendation was of course felt as a command, and the sale proceeded gloriously. The sums, however, thus scraped together were flung the next moment away. A large portion was spent in a donative to the Gallic legions; not less perhaps was squandered on the games which were now solemnized in the Gallic capital. The provincial nobles had already instituted games in honour of Augustus, which were enacted before his altar: the lively genius of the nation had begun to emulate the literary efforts of Greece and Rome, and contests in eloquence and versification held a prominent place in these exhibitions. Whatever might be the merit of these trials of wit and fancy, Caius, with the low humour natural to him, proceeded to degrade them by the unseemly penalties he inflicted on the unsuccessful competitors, some of whom were required to obliterate their compositions with their tongues, or be cast headlong into the furious waters of the Rhone.<sup>2</sup>

Auction of the  
imperial  
effects.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lix. 21.; Suet. *Calig.* 39.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 20. Comp. the allusion of Juvenal: "Lugdunensem rhetor dicturus ad aram" (i. 44.).



Whatever were the freaks of cruelty or folly with which the tyrant actually disgraced his sojourn among the Gauls, yet if we view the enterprise in the light in which

**Conspiracy against Calus.** I have ventured to place it, as a bold stroke of defensive policy, we shall be disposed to look with some indulgence on the bloody executions with which it is said to have been attended. Whether it be the case that

**Execution of Gætulicus and Lepidus, and disgrace of Livia and Agrippina.** Gætulicus resented his chief's intrusion by conspiring against his life and power, or whether the sentence of death which now descended on him was only a tyrant's measure of precaution, there can be little doubt that the position he occupied was incompatible with the dignity or safety of the imperial throne. There seems, however, reason to surmise that he laid himself open to the blow by an act of direct provocation. Caius was accompanied into Gaul by his surviving sisters, and by some of the habitual companions of his pleasures among the nobility of Rome. Of these none was so conspicuous as M. Æmilius Lepidus the youthful minion before mentioned, whom he had united to Drusilla, and whom, as was generally believed, he had intended to associate with her in the succession. The weakness of the emperor's health, and his late severe illness, might have seemed for a moment to bring this splendid inheritance almost within reach of the fortunate aspirant. The sceptre of the world, for which the Æmilii had so often contended, seemed about to descend into his grasp. But the death of his patron's favourite sister suddenly obscured the prospect. Still doomed to a private station, he continued perhaps to brood over his disappointment; and it is not improbable that the charge now advanced against Lepidus, of intriguing with Julia or Agrippina, or even with both at once, and of combining with them to overthrow the ruler of the state, was in fact substantially true. The authority and abilities of Gætulicus, if gained to their side, would lend strength to the blow; and discontented as he probably was, and perhaps alarmed for his own safety, nothing is more likely than that Gætulicus was drawn, as some accounts rep-

resented, into their conspiracy. Such at least was the statement which Caius caused to be circulated. The secret of the plot was betrayed, and its leaders seized and cut off in Gaul, at the end of the year 792. The guilty sisters were condemned to banishment, and Agrippina was compelled to carry the urn containing her paramour's ashes on foot to Rome. In the account of this affair which Caius transmitted to the senate for publication, he disclosed without reserve every particular of their wanton and shameless lives; though the Romans were fully persuaded that, however vicious they had proved themselves, the brother had been their seducer, and the partner of their worst iniquities. At the same time, he sent three swords, which he declared had been intended for his assassination, with directions that they should be suspended as votive offerings in the temple of Mars the Avenger. As his sisters, at his desire, had received many distinctions from the senate; he enjoined that in the future no such extraordinary marks of favour should be conferred on any of his own relations.<sup>1</sup>

On receiving their master's account of the conspiracy he had detected, and the danger from which he had relieved the state by its discovery, the senators had hastily sent a deputation to convey their humble congratulations, and offer him the honours of an ovation; but he complained of the number of the envoys as beneath the importance of the occasion, and of the ovation as unworthy of so great an achievement; he treated his visitors as spies, and particularly resented the mission of Claudius, who accompanied them, as sent to direct and admonish him with the authority of an uncle. He was on the Rhine at the time of their arrival; and it was said that, in his ill-humour, he even suffered Claudius to be thrown into the stream. Great was the terror which this reception created at Rome, where dire apprehensions already reigned of the proscriptions which might be expected to follow on the recent dis-

An ovation  
decreed on the  
suppression of  
this conspiracy.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 24.; *Claud.* 9. Dion, *lxx.* 22.

closures. The furious caprices of the emperor were manifested again in his sudden repudiation of Lollia, whom he accused of sterility, and the advancement of Milonia Cæsonia, with whom he was known to have been for some time connected, to the perilous honour of his hand. This woman, whose name was long held in detestation, is represented to us as neither young nor handsome; but it was believed that she had attracted and retained her lover's interest by the use of philtres, which contributed to unsettle his mind, and render him more intractable than ever. Cæsonia had borne three children to a former husband, and was far advanced in pregnancy at the time of this marriage. When, however, a daughter was born to him within a month of the nuptial solemnity, Caius did not scruple to acknowledge the child as actually his own, to carry it to the temples of the gods, to lay it in the lap of Minerva, and to give it the Cæsarean appellation of Julia Drusilla.<sup>1</sup>

From Gaul Caius had announced to the senate that he was about to assume the consulship for the third time at the commencement of 793 at Lugdunum, and had at the same time indicated whom he required to accept it as his colleague. But this nominee happening to die a few days before the first day of January, the fathers were thrown into perplexity, the tribunes and prætors not venturing to convene the senate on their own responsibility while there was still a consul absent from the city. They rushed tumultuously to the Capitol, and performed the customary sacrifices, not omitting to prostrate themselves before the emperor's vacant chair, and lay upon it the new year's presents, which, from the time of Au-

Caius marries  
Milonia Cæsonia.

A. D. 40.  
A. U. 793.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lix. 23, 28.; Juv. vi. 616.; Suet. *Calig.* 25.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xix. 1. Suetonius assures us that the emperor was the more convinced that the child was his own, by the ferocity it showed from his birth, attacking with its nails the eyes and countenances of its playfellows. It should be observed that Dion speaks of its being carried to the Capitol; but it is clear that the marriage and birth took place in Gaul. The confusion in Dion's chronology of this reign is very great.

gustus, the Cæsars had been wont to accept on these solemn occasions. This done, they repaired of their own accord to the Senate-house, and, neglecting all state affairs, consumed the day in complimentary harangues and fulsome adulation of the tyrant. On the third day they recovered somewhat of their presence of mind. The prætors constituted themselves a commission for conducting the business of the senate, and convened it in the usual form. Nevertheless, such was the abject terror in which it lay, that it dared not proceed to any matters of administration till it was announced that Caius had abdicated his functions on the twelfth day, and that the consuls designate were <sup>and resigns on the twelfth day.</sup> at liberty to ascend their chairs. The first act of the senate under their presidency was to decree that the birthdays of Caius and Drusilla should be solemnized with the same honours as that of Augustus; but their countrymen excused this new baseness, by asserting that the decree was made in compliance with an expressed command.<sup>1</sup> The fears of the bewildered nobles were more particularly excited at this moment by the report that their persecutor was attended in Gaul by a routine of foreign princes, such as Agrippa and Antiochus of Commagene, who, as they apprehended, were instructing him in the arts of Eastern sovereignty; and the fact of his having summoned Ptolemæus, son of Juba, king of Mauretania, to his presence, and put him to death for the sake of his riches, caused gloomy forebodings among such of the patricians at home as still retained their much coveted possessions.<sup>2</sup>

The conspiracy had been detected, the disloyal punished; the legions, warned by the fate of their contumacious chief, were transferred to Servius Galba, by whom discipline was enforced with pristine severity. Furloughs were withheld, the labours of the camp were redoubled, the soldiers were

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lix. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, l. c.: Suet. *Calig.* 26. Ptolemæus was the son of Juba by Cleopatra Selene, daughter of M. Antonius. He was, therefore, the grandson, Caius the great grandson, of the triumvir.

taught both to work and to fight, and to feel the difference between a dissolute intriguer in the prætorium and a stern warrior of the ancient stamp. When they ventured, in the relaxation of a camp spectacle, to applaud him, he drily rebuked their unwarrantable freedom with the order to keep their hands under their cloaks.<sup>1</sup> The winter of

The "British expedition" of Caius.

798 was occupied in preparations for a descent upon Britain, and the military season was opened by the emperor's advance from Lugdunum, or from the Rhine, to the shores of the channel. The troops which he had assembled in Gaul are said to have been exceedingly numerous; the enterprise he had in view was nothing less than the complete reduction of the island, the submission of which had been promised him by a recent fugitive. At Gesoriacum the legions were mustered in great force. While awaiting the moment of embarkation, they were directed one day to take up a military position on the beach; horse and foot were drawn up in order of battle fronting the waves of the ocean, and the whole armament of catapults and other engines of war was arrayed on their flanks, or in the rear, as if for immediate engagement. Caius himself reviewed his army from a trireme at sea; then landed and placed himself on a lofty tribunal, as about to give the signal for battle. Suddenly, amidst the clang of trumpets and measured voices of the centurions, the order issued to pile arms and pick up shells, with which every man hastened to fill his helmet and laid them at the emperor's feet. Collected into a vast heap together, these *spoils of the ocean*, as Caius described them, were sent to Rome, and the senate was directed to deposit them with due solemnity among the treasures of the palace and Capitol. In token of this pretended victory, the emperor, we are told, caused a lighthouse to be erected to guide vessels by night into the harbour; and the campaign being thus auspiciously terminated, he presented the men with a

<sup>1</sup> Suet. in *Galb.* 6.; "A Caius Cesare Gætulico substitutus, postridie quam ad legiones venit, solenni forte spectaculo plaudentes inhibuit, data tessera ut manus pœnulis continerent."

largess of a hundred sesterces apiece, and, as if this liberality had exceeded all previous examples, bade them retire, *glad and rich*, from his presence.<sup>1</sup> The good fortune which has given us a clue to the real proceedings of Caius on the Rhine, through the mists of malicious misrepresentations, seems here wholly to desert us. Yet I hesitate to believe that the *British expedition*, as it was sarcastically denominated, was such a monstrous farce as it has been described. The erection of a lighthouse indicates at least an intelligent purpose, and cannot have been a mere whimsical fancy. Possibly Caius was diverted from a real intention of attacking Britain, by some act of submission, from which he anticipated the opening of freer and more regular communications with the natives. Even the picking of shells may be a grotesque misrepresentation of receiving a tribute of Rutupian pearls.

Nevertheless, whatever distrust we may feel of the burlesque account of this exploit transmitted to us, the claim Caius now advanced to a triumph, as Caius claims a triumph. for a glorious success, was no doubt utterly extravagant; nor is it incredible that the tricks with which he is said to have given colour to it, were hardly less absurd than they are described. Seven times, he declared, the army had acknowledged his victories by saluting him as Imperator. The British chief Adminius, who had solicited through his aid restoration to power, was retained, he said, as a pledge of the barbarians' submission. He had placed his foot upon the ocean, and reduced it to dependence for ever. Accordingly he issued orders to the imperial procurators to prepare a triumph on the most magnificent scale that had ever yet been attempted; but directed them at the same time not to lavish on it the treasures of the fiscus, but to extort the requisite sums from the citizens and provincials, for which purpose he gave them full authority over the property of all his subjects. Meanwhile he collected, for lack of veritable captives, a few

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 46.; Dion, lix. 26. Compare the references to this affair in Tacitus (*Agric.* 13.; *German.* 37.): "Mox ingentes Cæii Cæsaris minæ in ludibrium versa."

German slaves or fugitives, or hired the tallest and bulkiest of the Gauls themselves, causing them to dye their hair red and let it grow, to acquaint themselves with the language of the tribes beyond the Rhine, and assume German appellations.<sup>1</sup> To make the intended ceremony still more imposing he directed the galleys in which he had put to sea to be impelled against the stream of the Rhine and thence drawn overland to the rivers of Gaul, and thus conveyed to Rome. The legions were wafted by this circuitous course more expeditiously, perhaps, than they could have marched by land; and Caius led them throughout in person, and visited on his way the stations on the Lower Rhine, in which his father had planted his tent, and with which his own childhood had been familiar. Possibly he conferred here with Galba on the last measures he might require to punish the designs of Gætulicus, and his harsh and violent temper may have prompted him to a more bloody inquisition than he found it, on reflection, prudent to enforce. But the report that he now remembered the mutiny of certain legions against Germanicus, and the expulsion of Agrippina from the camp, with himself an infant in her arms, and proposed in his fury to massacre, after twenty-five years' interval, the whole of the battalions which bore their name, and when dissuaded from this bloody purpose was only deterred by his fears from decimating them, is surely too extravagant for belief.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 47.: "Coegitque non tantum rutilare et submittere comam, sed et sermonem Germanicum addiscere et nomina barbarica ferre." Compare the evident allusion to this trick, real or imputed, in Persius, vi. 45.: "Jam lutea gausapa captis, Essedaque, ingentesque, locat Cæsonia Rhenos." But after all the captives of Caius were never, perhaps, exhibited in Rome at all; and we have in Tacitus a similar account of an imposture practised, as he assures us, at a later period by Domitian (*Agrie.* 39.). Possibly the habit of wearing false flaxen hair had made the citizens suspicious of the genuine.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 48.: "Consilium iniiit nefandæ atrocitatis legiones . . . contrucidandi . . . vixque a tam præcipiti cogitatione revocatus inhiberi nullo modo potuit quin decimare velle perseveraret. Vocatos itaque ad concionem inermes . . . equitatu armato circumdedit. Sed quum videret suspecta re plerosque dilabi ad resumenda . . . arma profugit concionem," &c. Not-

It has been recorded how, when Augustus was journeying simply habited among the Alps, a Gaul who had designed to attack him was restrained by the imposing majesty of his countenance.<sup>1</sup> Far different was the impression which the stage-divinity of Caius made on

Caius returns  
to Rome.

the rude minds of the provincials. One of them, beholding him on his tribunal glittering with the insignia of Jove, was seen to smile: the emperor demanded what he thought of him; *I think you a great absurdity*, was the blunt reply. Possibly the imperial mummer at the moment had been thinking the same; at all events, his sense of humour was touched, and the man, being no better than a low artificer, was allowed to escape unpunished.<sup>2</sup> He reserved all his anger for the nobles and senators, who, it seems, not venturing to decree him honours after their late ungracious reception, and apprehensive lest his claim to congratulation on his maritime successes might prove no more than a grim jest, had neglected to invite him to enter the city in triumph. *I am coming*, he exclaimed, *I am coming—but not for the senate—for the knights and people who alone deserve my presence among them. For the senate I will neither be a prince nor a citizen, but*, clapping his hand on his sword, *an emperor and a conqueror*. He then forbade any of the order to come forth to meet him, and waiving the offer of a triumph, which they had too long withheld, made his entry with the solemnity of an ovation only, and scattered money to the populace. His return took place on his birthday, the last day of August, in the year 793.<sup>3</sup>

The last, and in the eyes of the Romans themselves the most abominable, phase of the Caian tyranny remained still

withstanding the particularity of this account, I must reject the whole as incredible.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. Oct. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lix. 28.: καὶ δὲ ἀπεκρίνατο, ἐρῶ γὰρ αὐτὸ τὸ λεχθὲν, ὅτι μέγα παῖς ἄρρημα· καὶ οὐδὲν μέντοι δεινὸν ἔπαθε, σκυ-ότοιμος γὰρ ἦν.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. Calig. 49.



Caius finally  
avows himself  
a tyrant and  
autocrat.

to be exhibited. They had witnessed his assumption of divinity with a smile; and even the rivalry he had affected with the Jupiter of the Capitol, whose thunders he pretended to imitate, and with the tale of whose parricide and incest he had met the imputation of similar crimes against himself, had excited no other feeling, perhaps, but one of placid amusement.<sup>1</sup> The selfish cowardice with which the nobles had beheld the cruelties inflicted on so many of their own class, without raising a hand, or even a murmur, on their behalf, amazing as it seems to us at first sight, may be accounted for by the distrust of one another, with which the system of delation had generally imbued them. The people growled with indignation at the unwonted exactions imposed on them; nevertheless, they could not long resist the seductions of new shows and largesses. The style and character of the principate had been coloured indeed more and more by the arbitrary usages of Eastern monarchy; no rule or privilege could continue to hold its ground against the will of the prince, whose caprices could be enforced with the naked sword by a devoted body-guard. But it was not till he entered Rome in the garb of an Emperor, and made the forum his camp and the palace his prætorium,—it was not till he brandished the fasces in the eyes of the citizens, and subjected them to military law,—that Caius really appeared to Roman imaginations as a Pisistratus or a Tarquin. From this time the die was cast, and he finally abandoned all the decorous fictions of the republic. He avowed himself a tyrant, and continued thenceforth to wear the outward ensigns of autooracy without scruple.<sup>2</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> Aurel. Vict. *de Cæsar*. 4.: “Cum Jovem se ob incestum . . . assereret.” Comp. Dion, lix. 26.: Ζεύς τε εἶναι ἐπλάττετο, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ γυναιξὶν ἄλλαις τε πολλαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς μάλιστα συνεῖναι προεφασίσατο.

<sup>2</sup> Aurel. Victor, *de Cæsar*. 4.: “His elatus dominum dici, atque insigne regni capiti nectere tentaverat.” In the *Epitome* the same author asserts that Caius actually wore the diadem. Suetonius, in a passage before referred to, says that he was very near assuming it, and only desisted on the assurance that he had risen above the highest eminence of kings and sovereigns. *Calig.* 22.

can hardly have been unconscious that this overt act of usurpation would raise him up more dangerous enemies than all his previous atrocities.<sup>1</sup> Another Caius had perished by the dagger, and such was the fate which he must have apprehended for himself. But the disdain he felt for the wretched people he had trampled upon, seems to have fortified his courage. When a plot against his life was discovered by the treachery of one of the conspirators, and the persons implicated in it tried to save themselves by denouncing some of his most familiar associates, such as the captain of his guards, and his favourite freedman Callistus, he went up boldly to the accused, bared his breast, and offered them a sword to take his life if they really desired it.<sup>2</sup> This, at least, was not the act of a coward, such as Caius is generally represented; nor, it may be added, in spite of many furious declamations against him, can we charge him with bloody severity in revenging this attempt upon his person. Cerialis, the leader of the conspiracy, though put to the question to reveal its extent, was suffered to escape with his life, to perish many years after in a similar enterprise against another master.<sup>3</sup>

Conspiracy  
against him  
detected.

The senate, however, seized the occasion to recover their master's favour by decreeing solemn games for his preservation, and by offering him a seat in the Curia so far elevated above the floor that his person should be inaccessible to an assailant.<sup>4</sup> This anxiety to place him as it were beyond their own reach may indicate

Crowning ex-  
travagance of  
the Cæsar  
principate.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus mentions, among the atrocities of Caius which gave the greatest offence, his allowing slaves to lay informations against their masters. *Antiq.* xix. i. 2. Another provocation was the report that he meditated transferring the seat of empire to Alexandria or Antium, his birthplace. *Suet. Calig.* 49.

<sup>2</sup> Zonaras, xi. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Tac. Ann.* xvi. 17. The language of Seneca in his treatise on Anger (*de Ira*, 19.) strongly exemplifies the baneful passion against which he preaches. It is impossible to attach much importance to denunciations, the climax of which is that Caius allowed some of his victims to be executed at night. "Quid tam inauditum quam nocturnum supplicium? . . . quantum fuit lucem exspectare!"

<sup>4</sup> *Dion*, lix. 26.

that the intended attack upon him, like that upon Julius Cæsar, was to have been made in the Senate-house, and that the consent of the whole body of senators was fully expected. In the face of such evidence of the general detestation in which he was held, Caius still relied on disarming his foes by inspiring them with mutual jealousy and distrust. Shrinking from combination and almost from conversation with one another, they vied in paying abject court to the tyrant, or to the vilest of his creatures. Among the foremost of these was a freedman named Protogenes, who was said to carry about with him two tablets, inscribed *the Sword* and *the Dagger*, which contained the names of the persons destined, the one to execution, perhaps, the other to assassination.\* Whenever this noted delator entered the Senate-house, the fathers crowded round to take him obsequiously by the hand. On seeing a certain Seribonius Proculus thus coming forward to greet him, *What!* he exclaimed, *durst thou salute me, enemy as thou art to Cæsar?* and at the words the senators fell upon the wretched man, and stabbed him to death with their styles.<sup>1</sup> Such an instance of slavish pusillanimity might reassure the emperor amidst the dangers by which he was actually environed. He indulged more freely, perhaps, than ever in the notion of his own omnipotence, and rioted in the fantastic caprices to which such a notion seemed always to prompt him. One day, at a public banquet, when the consuls were reclining by his side, he burst suddenly into a fit of laughter; and when they courteously inquired the cause of his mirth, astounded them by coolly replying that he was thinking how by one word he could cause both their heads to roll on the floor.<sup>2</sup> He amused himself with similar

<sup>1</sup> Dion, l. c. Suetonius (*Calig.* c. 49.) says that these *γράμματα λυγρά* were discovered among the emperor's papers after his death. At the same time a chest was also found, filled with a great variety of poisons, the power and qualities of which were carefully marked, as ascertained by experiment. When they were thrown into the sea, the fishes perished far and near.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, l. c.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 32.: "Quid nisi uno meo nutu jugulari utrumque vestrum statim posse?"

banter even with his wife Cæsonia, for whom he seems to have had a stronger feeling than for any of his former consorts. While fondling her neck he is reported to have said, *Fair as it is, how easily I could sever it.*<sup>1</sup>

But the end of this monstrous principate, not yet four years old, was already drawing nigh; and, if we may believe our accounts, the tyrant's overthrow was due not to abhorrence of his crimes or indignation at his assaults on the Roman liberties, so much as to resentment at a private affront. Among the indiscretions which seem to indicate the partial madness of the wretched Caius, was the caprice with which he turned from his known foes against his personal friends and familiars. Thus he sacrificed to a freak of ill-humour the tragedian Apelles, the companion of his pleasures, and instigator of many of his excesses. No one felt himself secure, neither the freedmen who attended on his person, nor the guards who watched over his safety. Among these last was Cassius Chærea, tribune of a prætorian cohort, whose shrill woman's voice provoked the merriment of his master, and subjected him to injurious insinuations.<sup>2</sup> Even when he demanded the watchword for the night the emperor would insult him with words and gestures. Chærea resolved to wipe out the affront in blood. He sought Callistus and others, the same apparently who had before been accused of conspiring against Caius, and who had lived in apprehension ever since. He soothed the jealousies which Caius had sown between them, persuaded them to trust one another in their common peril, and organized with them and some of the most daring of the nobles a plot against the emperor's life. Yet this was not a conspiracy of the senate: it had no consular or prætor at its head, nor had it any ulterior project in view. There was no design of sac-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 33.: "Tam bona cervix simul ac jussero demetetur."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 56.: Senec. *de const. Sap.* 18.: "Chæreas tribuno militum sermo non pro manu erat, languidus sono et infracta voce suspectior. Huic Caius signum petenti modo Veneris, modo Priapi dabat." Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. l. 5.; Dion, lix. 29.

rificing the tyrant in the Curia, and proclaiming tyranny at an end. From want of resolution the deed was postponed from day to day, and not portents only, but some treacherous whispers may have warned the emperor to *beware of Cassius!* A woman named Quintilia, the mistress of one of the conspirators, refused under torture to discover the design.<sup>1</sup> Caius contented himself with despatching an order for the execution of a Cassius Longinus, proconsul of Asia, who was accordingly summoned to Rome, but arrived there just too late to suffer by the tyrant's mandate.<sup>2</sup> At last, after many delays, the festival of the Palatine games was fixed on for carrying the project into effect. Four days did Caius preside in the theatre, surrounded by the friends and guards who were sworn to slay him, but still lacked the courage. On the fifth and last, the 24th of January 794, feeling indisposed from the evening's debauch, he hesitated at first to rise. His attendants, however, prevailed on him to return once more to the shows; and as he was passing through the vaulted passage which led from the palace to the Circus, he inspected a choir of noble youths from Asia, who were engaged to perform upon the stage. He was about to call them back into the palace to rehearse their parts before him, but the leader of the band excused himself on account of hoarseness. Caius was still engaged in conversation with them when Chærea and another tribune, Sabinus, made their way to him: the one struck him on the throat from behind with his sword, while the other was in the act of demanding the watchword. A second blow cleft the tyrant's jaw. He fell, and drawing his limbs together to save his body, still screamed, *I live! I live!* while the conspirators thronging over him, and crying, *again! again!* hacked him with thirty wounds.

Death of Caius.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* l. c.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 57.; Dion, lix. 29. This, however, would suppose an interval of nearly two months, which seems hardly admissible. Cassius had been the husband of Drusilla, whom he was forced to relinquish to Caius, to be united to M. Lepidus.

The bearers of his litter rushed to his assistance with their poles, while his body-guard of Germans struck wildly at the assassins, and amongst the crowd which surrounded them, killed, it was said, more than one senator who had taken no part in the affair. The conspirators extricated themselves from the narrow passages, and left the body where it fell. It was borne in secret by friendly hands to the pleasure grounds of the Lamiæ palace, and there hastily and imperfectly consumed, and thrust into a shallow tomb. At a later period, the sisters Livia and Agrippina, restored from banishment, exhumed it, reduced it solemnly to ashes, and consigned it again to a more decent sepulchre. Till this was done the shade, we are assured, could have no rest itself, nor would it suffer the keepers of the garden to slumber undisturbed at night.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 59. Caius was slain in his thirtieth year. His reign lasted three years, ten months, and eight days, from the 16th of March, 790, to 24th of Jan. 794.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

THE SENATE DELIBERATES ON THE STATE OF AFFAIRS.—THE PRÆTORIANS CARRY OFF CLAUDIUS TO THEIR CAMP AND SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO HIM.—THE SENATE YIELDS AND ACCEPTS HIM AS EMPEROR—HE PROCLAIMS AN AMNESTY, EXCEPTING ONLY CHERREA AND A FEW OTHERS.—CONTEMPT AND NEGLECT WITH WHICH HE HAD BEEN TREATED IN HIS EARLY YEARS.—HIS DEVOTION TO LITERATURE.—HE TAKES THE POLICY OF AUGUSTUS AS HIS MODEL: 1. HIS MILITARY EXPLOITS AND CONDUCT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. 2. HIS REVISION OF THE SENATE AND KNIGHTS, AND CENSUS A. U. 800. 3. HIS ADMINISTRATION OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS.—SECULAR GAMES A. U. 800. 4. HIS LABORIOUS ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. 5. HIS BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTIONS: THE AQUA CLAUDIA: THE PORTUS AUGUSTI: DRAINING OF THE LAKE FUCINUS. 6. HIS PUBLIC SHOWS IN THE AMPHITHEATRE, AND MOCK SEA-FIGHT IN THE LAKE FUCINUS.—GLUTTONY AND INTemperance ASCRIBED TO HIM.

**T**HUS, after an interval of eighty-four years, another Caius Cæsar fell by the hand of the assassin, but one who would never have been mentioned in conjunction with the first, except for the likeness of his name and of the manner of his death.<sup>1</sup> The parallel, however, was not confined to the first act of the tragedy; its subsequent scenes presented a repetition of nearly similar circumstances;—the same confusion among the assassins themselves, the same hasty and ill-concerted attempts at establishing the freedom they had recovered, and, lastly, a like defeat and overthrow by the strong and well-directed will of a military power. It would seem that the Romans, strong as they were in individual enterprise, and though trained by all their habits to deliberation in common, were

Confusion of  
the assassins.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 68.: "Repentina vis dictatorem Cæsarem oppresserat occultæ Gaium insidiæ."

little capable of combining to any purpose; possibly the very force of their personal characters, and the vehemence of their wills, rendered them, in the gravest crises of their history, thus unfit for united action.

When each of the conspirators had thrust his weapon into the mangled body, and the last shrieks of its agony had been silenced, they escaped with all speed from the corridor in which it lay; but they had made no dispositions for what was to follow, and were content to leave it to the consuls and senate, amazed and unprepared, to decide on the future destiny of the republic. Among the first of the emperor's friends who penetrated to the spot where he fell, was the trusty Agrippa, who threw a mantle over the body, and tried for a moment to conceal the fact of his death. But the violence of the German guards, and the sturdy bearing of a consular, Valerius Asiaticus, who proclaimed aloud that the tyrant had ceased to breathe, and how much he regretted having borne no part in the transaction himself, made it fully known, and at the same time daunted the courage of those who might have avenged it. There remained no other duty for Agrippa to perform but to carry off the remains, and while awaiting the course of events, consign them hastily to the grave. While the Germans were awed by the imposing attitude of Valerius, some cohorts of the city guards accepted the orders of the consuls, and occupied the public places under their direction. At the same time the consuls, Sentius Saturninus and Pomponius Secundus, the latter of whom had been substituted for Caius himself only a few days before, convened the senate, not in the accustomed Curia, because it bore the name of Julian, but in the temple of the Capitoline Jupiter. The first act of the sitting was to issue an edict in which the tyranny of Caius was denounced, and a remission of the most obnoxious of his taxes proclaimed, together with the promise of a donative to the soldiers. The fathers next proceeded to deliberate on the form under which the government should be henceforth administered. On this point no settled princi-

The consuls  
convene the  
senate for de-  
liberation.



ples prevailed. Some were ready to vote that the memory of the Cæsars should be abolished, their temples overthrown, and the free state of the Scipios and Catos restored; others contended for the continuance of monarchy in another family, and among the chiefs of nobility more than one candidate sprang up presently to claim it. The debate lasted late into the night; and in default of any other specific arrangement, the consuls continued to act as the leaders of the commonwealth. Saturninus obtained a decree in honour of the restorers of public freedom, and especially of Cassius Chærea, the head and hand of the conspiracy. When the hero approached the curule chairs and demanded the watchword of the consuls, he was entrusted, amidst vociferous acclamations, with the sacred name of *Liberty*. The senators separated. Chærea delivered the word to the four Urban cohorts, and despatched a tribune named Lupus to execute the vengeance of the state on the wretched Cæsonia, whose reputed influence over her husband marked her as an object of particular detestation, and on her child, the monster's only offspring.<sup>1</sup>

*But while the senate deliberated, the prætorian guards had resolved.*<sup>2</sup> Accident presented them with an object to rally

The prætorians carry off Claudius to their camp, and swear allegiance to him.

round, and a keen sense of interest combined with the consciousness of power to determine them to exert the strength which their union and discipline gave them. In the confusion which ensued on the first news of the event, several of their body had flung themselves furiously into the palace, and begun to plunder its glittering chambers. None dared to offer them any opposition; the slaves and freedmen fled or concealed themselves. One of the inmates, half hidden behind a curtain in an obscure corner, was dragged forth with brutal violence; and great was the intruders' surprise when they recognised him as Claudius, the long despised and neglected

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 60.; Dion, lx. 1.; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, *Decl. and Fall*, ch. iii.

uncle of the murdered emperor.<sup>1</sup> He sank at their feet almost senseless with terror: but the soldiers in their wildest mood still respected the blood of the Cæsars, and instead of slaying or maltreating the suppliant, the brother of Germanicus, they hailed him, more in jest perhaps than earnest, with the title of Imperator, and carried him off to their camp. During the night, while the senate was still debating, and the soldiers, now collected in greater numbers, were pressing the empire, which he dared not yet accept, with more determination upon him, the consuls, informed of his place of retreat, sent some of the tribunes to invite him to their meeting, to deliver his opinion upon the state of affairs. To this summons he timidly replied that he was detained in the camp by force, and the clash of arms and menacing attitude of the soldiers seemed sufficiently to confirm the excuse. In the morning, when it was found that the senate had come to no conclusion, and that the people crowding about its place of meeting were urging it with loud cries to appoint a single chief, and were actually naming him as the object of their choice, Claudius found courage to suffer the prætorians to swear allegiance to him, and at the same time promised them a donative of fifteen thousand sesterces apiece.\* At the same time Agrippa, who had quitted the half-burnt bones of Caius to repair to the long-deserted associate in whose fortune he now confided, went in his interest to the senate, and exhorted it to yield with a good grace to the force which was about to be arrayed against it. While protesting that all his own wishes were on its side, he declared that there was no hope of its success in the impending struggle. *The prætorians*, he said, *besides their greater numbers, are trained*

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 10.: "Prorepsit ad solarium proximum, interque prætenta foribus vela se abdidit." The solarium was the terrace or portico outside the house; the windows which opened upon it were furnished with curtains. Some historians have adopted Burmann's unnecessary conjecture "scalarium," as if Claudius had hidden himself under the stairs. Dion says, ἐν γωνίᾳ τοῦ σκοτεινῆς; Josephus, κατὰ τὴν προσβατὸν ἐκείνης βαθυλαὶ ἡσπλον. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 8.

\* Suet. *Claud.* 10.: "Primus Cæsarum fidem militis etiam præmio pignatus." This fatal example we shall find regularly followed for the future.

*and veteran soldiers ; our forces are a mere handful of slaves and freedmen.*<sup>1</sup> He earnestly counselled it to temporize and negotiate. On the other hand, he secretly urged Claudius to persist in his claims to unconditional submission, though he recommended him to speak of the august assembly in terms of respect and consideration, to flatter its vanity by affecting to consult it, and by promising to approve himself in all things a ruler of a different stamp from the tyrant who had goaded it to its futile assertion of liberty.<sup>2</sup>

The senators assembled once again in the temple of Jupiter ;<sup>3</sup> but now their numbers were reduced to not more than

The senate  
submits, and  
accepts  
Claudius as  
emperor.

a hundred, and even these met rather to support the pretensions of certain of their members, who aspired to the empire, among whom were Valerius, Asiaticus, and Minucianus, the husband of Julia, than to maintain the cause of the ancient republic. But the formidable array of the prætorians, who had issued from their camp into the city, and the demonstrations of the popular will, daunted all parties in the assembly: even the guards in which it confided, vacillated, and Chærea in vain protested, almost alone, against the substitution, as he said, of an idiot for a madman; while Sabinus sullenly declared that he would not survive the advent of another Cæsar to power. Presently the Urban cohorts passed over, with their officers and colours, to the opposite side. All was lost: the prætorians, thus reinforced, led their hero to the palace, and there he commanded the senate to attend upon him. Nothing remained but to obey and pass the decree, which had now become a formal act of investi-

<sup>1</sup> The Vigiles, or Urban cohorts, were a corps of freedmen, according to the institution of Augustus. Besides them, the senators might have armed their slaves.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. Dion, ll. cc. ; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Josephus says in the temple of Jupiter Νικήφορος or Victor. He may mean Jupiter Stator, whose temple below the Capitoline was not unfrequently used for its meetings by the senate, or, more probably, this is his way of expressing the temple of Jupiter in the Capitol, to whom the spoils of victory (νικητήρια) were dedicated.

ture, by which the name and honours of Imperator were bestowed upon the new chief of the commonwealth. Such was the first creation of an emperor by the military power of the prætorians: we shall witness at no distant period the interference of a still stronger power, that of the legions themselves, in the work.<sup>1</sup>

Surrounded by drawn swords Claudius had found courage to face his nephew's murderers, and to vindicate his authority to the citizens, by a strong measure of retribution, in sending Chærea and Lupus, with a few others of the blood-embued, to immediate execution; while Sabinus, omitted from the proscription, kept his word to his associates by throwing himself on his own sword. Claudius was satisfied with this act of vigour, and proceeded, with a moderation but little expected, to publish an amnesty for all the words and acts of the late interregnum.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless for thirty days he did not venture to come himself into the Curia, so terrible was the impression the deed of blood had made upon him, and so conscious was he of his personal inferiority to the nobles who had aspired to the place he occupied in virtue of his name alone. When at last he recovered courage to take his seat between the consuls, he caused the præfect and tribunes of his guard to attend constantly about his person, a precaution

Claudius proclaims an amnesty, excepting only Chærea and a few others.

<sup>1</sup> Aurel. Vict. *de Cæsar.* 4.: "Ita Romæ regia potestas firmata." A coin of Claudius bears on one side the legend IMPER. RECEPT. (imperatore recepto); on the other, PRÆTOR. RECEPT. (prætorianis receptis). Eckhel, *Docr. Numm.* vi. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 11.: "Imperio stabilito nihil antiquius duxit quam id biduum . . . memoriæ eximere." Dion, lx. 3. Orosius speaks in magniloquent language of this act of clemency, vii. 6. This Christian writer takes a peculiar view of the reign of Claudius. At its commencement, he says, the apostles Peter and Paul came to Rome, the faith was preached, and Rome was blessed in consequence with many signal advantages—a merciful emperor, a wise administration, prosperity at home and abroad. But after Claudius expelled the Jews or Christians from the city, all this was changed. Rome was harassed by famine, the emperor abandoned himself to sanguinary tyranny, and perished in the end miserably by poison.

to which Tiberius had occasionally consented, but which Caius had boldly disregarded.<sup>1</sup> The same apprehensions followed him from the Curia to the council-room, to the hall of audience, and even to the private apartments of the palace. Before the curtains which veiled the entrance to his ante-chamber guards were posted to examine all who entered. Down to a late period of his principate even women and children were not exempted from the search, lest they should bear about them concealed weapons. Satellites, lance in hand, were stationed at the head and foot of his couch at the banquet, and he was even served at table by soldiers. This jealous custom he retained to the end of his reign, and it became an established etiquette of the court under his successors. Even when he visited a sick friend, for Claudius affected as far as possible the obliging manners of a patrician citizen, he caused the chamber of the invalid, and even his bedclothes, to be carefully examined.<sup>2</sup>

The personal fears, indeed, of the new emperor contributed with a kindly and placable disposition to make him  
Fears and moderation of Claudius.
anxious to gain his subjects' good-will by the gentleness and urbanity of his deportment.<sup>3</sup>

Far from assuming the cold reserve of Tiberius, or the ferocious pride of his nearest predecessor, Claudius showed himself full of consideration for all who had any claims on the prince and father of the people. His proclamation of amnesty was followed by the pardon of numerous exiles and criminals, especially such as were suffering under sentence for the crime of majestas. The wretched sisters of Caius were recalled, and allowed to return to their

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 35.: "Quamquam jactator civilitatis." Dion (lx. 8.): of the guards in the banquet hall: καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἐξ ἐκείνων παραδεχθὲν καὶ δεῦρο διελγίγνεται. Of the personal search: ἡ δὲ ἐρευναὶ ἡ διὰ πάντων διὰ Ὀκταβιανῶν ἐπαύσατο.

<sup>3</sup> Aurel. Victor, *de Cesar.* 4.: "Pleraque per formidinem tamen egregie consultabat."

domestic duties or dissipations.<sup>1</sup> Many harsh enactments of the late ruler were annulled, and compensation made wherever it was possible. Confiscated estates were relinquished. Moderation and generosity characterized the fiscal measures of the opening reign: the new-year's presents, which Caius had not only accepted but solicited,—to enable him, as he said, to bear the expense of rearing a daughter,—were waived, and even interdicted. The emperor refused the inheritance of any man who had relatives of his own; he persisted, moreover, to the last in declining the *prænomen* of *Imperator*.<sup>2</sup> The statues of which Caius had plundered Greece and Asia were generally sent back, and the temples he had seized for his own cult,—as for instance, that of Apollo at Miletus, one of the finest edifices of the age,—were restored to their proper divinities. The honours which Claudius paid to the memory of his brother Germanicus and his parents, as well as to Livia and to Augustus, were accepted as a pledge that he would take these illustrious examples for his model, and for their sake he was excused for not withholding respect even from Caius and Tiberius.<sup>3</sup> The discovery Claudius made, or pretended, of lists of intended victims, and of the fatal poison-chest, added to the horror of the citizens at the monster from whom they had escaped, and made them doubly grateful for the goodness of his successor. The popularity of the new prince, though manifested, thanks to his own discretion, by no such grotesque and impious flatteries as attended on the opening promise of

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lx. 4. Suet. (*Claud.* 12.) says that he obtained the express sanction of the senate for every such act of grace.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 12. This peculiarity is confirmed by the coins and inscriptions. See Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 247. The moderation of Claudius is specified also by Dion, lx. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 11.: “*Iurandum neque sanctius sibi, neque crebrius . . . quam per Augustum. Avie Livie divinos honores . . . parentibus inferias publicas . . . Ne Marcum quidem Antonium inhonoratum transmissit. Tiberio marmoreum arcum peregit.*” Though he abolished the acts of Caius—those of Tiberius had been abolished before—he refused to make a festival of the day of his assassination.

Caius, was certainly not less deeply felt. When, a few months after his accession, during a temporary absence, a report was spread of his assassination, the people were violently excited; they assailed the soldiers and the senate with cries of treason and parricide, and were not appeased till the chief magistrates came forward, and solemnly protested that their favourite was safe, and returning rapidly to the city.<sup>1</sup>

The confidence indeed of the upper classes, after the bitter disappointment they had so lately suffered, was not to be so lightly won. The senate and knights might view their new ruler with indulgence, and hope for the best; but they had been too long accustomed to regard him as proscribed from power by constitutional unfitness, as imbecile in mind, and which was perhaps in their estimation even a worse defect, as misshapen and half-developed in physical force, to anticipate from him a wise or

The early life of Claudius.  
  
He had been treated with neglect and contempt for his infirmities of mind and body.

vigorous administration." The neglect with which his education was treated in his early years when he was abandoned to the care of nurses, and the instructions of a coarse and senseless pedagogue, who exasperated his infirmities

by ill-usage, was owing probably to the crime which a Roman parent seldom forgave, the weakness of his constitution and the distortion of his frame.<sup>2</sup> In another rank he would have been exposed perhaps in infancy; as the son of Drusus and Antonia he was permitted to live: but he became from the first an object of disgust to his parents, who put him generally out of their sight, and left him to grow up in the hands of hirelings without judgment or feeling.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 12.

<sup>2</sup> Aurel. Vict. *de Cæsar.* 4.: "Et sanè quia vecors erat mitissimus videbatur imprudentibus."

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 2.: "Etiam post tutelam receptam alieni arbitrii et sub pedagogo fuit; quem barbarum et olim superjumentarium, ex industria sibi appositum, ut se quibuscunque de causis quam servissime coërceret." Publius, the eldest son of the first Scipio Africanus, is perhaps the only known instance of a Roman of his birth and station withheld, under the commonwealth, from public affairs by the delicacy of his constitution. Cic. *Brut.* 19.; *Off.* 33.

The child was born at Lugdunum, in 744, on the first of August, the auspicious day of the dedication of the altar of Augustus, and received the name of Tiberius Claudius Drusus, to which was afterwards added that of Germanicus, on the premature decease of his father. His childhood and youth were one long sickness, uncheered by parental affection; and he seems to have been deemed from the first unfit for any bodily exercises. His mother was not ashamed to call him a monster of a man, an abortion of nature: the greatest expression of contempt she could apply to any one was to call him more a fool than her son Claudius. His grandmother Livia held him in disdain, and seldom even spoke to him: her admonitions were given in short and sharp letters, or conveyed to him by the mouth of others. His sister Livilla, on once hearing that he might possibly be called hereafter to power, exclaimed loudly at the unworthy fate of the Roman people to fall under such a governor. Augustus himself, who should have known human nature better, and who might have felt sympathy with bodily infirmity, could not endure that any of his race should lack the personal qualities which befitted the highest station, and slighted the poor youth both in public and in his own family. Some fragments of the emperor's correspondence are cited, to show the little esteem in which he held him.<sup>1</sup> Thus he consults with Livia how the youth is to be treated, and how far it will be proper to produce him in public. He may be suffered to attend at a pontifical banquet, if he will submit to conform to the example and guidance of a cousin; but he can not be permitted to witness the games of the circus from the conspicuous elevation of the imperial lodge. He must not be seen at the festival of the Latin Færiæ, either at Alba or in Rome. If he can follow the sacred procession up the mountain with his brother Germanicus, people will ask why he is not entrusted with municipal office, which of course is out of the question. *I wish*, says Augustus, *that the poor*

<sup>1</sup> Suet. Claud. 4



creature would take pains to imitate some respectable personage in bearing, gait, and gesture. . . . You may imagine, he adds, how surprised I was to find something to like in his declaiming, for you know that he cannot ordinarily even speak so as to be understood. With this strong prejudice against his grandchild, we cannot wonder that the emperor allowed him to enjoy no higher distinction than the formal dignity of the Augurate, and that in the distribution of his legacies, in which he carefully marked the degrees of his esteem, he left him no more than the trifling bequest of eight hundred sesterces.<sup>1</sup>

The obscurity in which the young man was retained by Augustus, continued still to envelope him under the next principate. He petitioned Tiberius to be suffered to partake of the honours and burdens of the state, but the empty distinction of the consular ornaments was the utmost that was conceded to him. After this mortification he relinquished all hope of public service, and retired to his country seats, where he associated, as was reported, with none but the meanest companions. The men of his own class, indeed, were too busy in paying court to the emperor or his favourites to attend to a despised outcast: his early friend Agrippa, as we have seen, deliberately cast him off as an unprofitable acquaintance. Yet there is no evidence of his having replaced these selfish companions by less worthy associates. The charges of drunkenness, gambling, and addiction to women, all which were now heaped upon him, are probably exaggerated.<sup>2</sup> The extent of his literary labours, in which he rivalled the most industrious students of antiquity, seems alone to preclude the possibility of excessive habitual irregularity.

Withheld from active life, he devotes himself to literary labours.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 4. Champigny observes (*Cleare*, i. 331.): "Auguste ne l'aimait pas; il n'en fit jamais qu'un Augure: il le trouvait trop imbecille pour faire autre chose que deviner l'avenir."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 5.: "Seper veterem segnitiae notam, ebrietatis quoque et aless infamiam subit." Comp. c. 33. Tac. *Ann.* xii. 49.: "Quum privatus olim conversatione scurrarum incers otium oblectaret."

Claudius, we are told, composed a history of Roman affairs from the battle of Actium in no less than forty-one books; to this he added a biography of himself, or memoir of his own times, in eight, a history of the Etruscans in twenty, and of the Carthaginians in eight also.<sup>1</sup> Besides these ponderous historical works, he composed a defence of Cicero against the criticisms of Asinius Gallus, a comedy in the Greek language, and a treatise on the art of dice-playing.<sup>2</sup> It may be suspected, indeed, that a great part of the labour of these various compositions was shared by the grammarians and learned freedmen with whom the literary Roman generally surrounded himself;<sup>3</sup> but whatever allowance we make for their assistance, it will still appear that he possessed a power of application quite inconsistent with the weakness of intellect which his maligners so freely imputed to him. Nevertheless these respectable occupations gained him no consideration. Tiberius treated him to the last with a contumely and injustice which seems to have revolted the citizens. Caius, out of deference to the general sentiment, elevated him to the consulship, and allowed him to appear at the spectacles in the place which befitted him, where he sometimes represented the absent emperor himself; but in private he was still subjected to the grossest indignities, and

<sup>1</sup> The first of these works he began originally from the death of Cæsar, but was admonished by his mother and Livia that the theme was ill suited to his position. Of his own life he wrote "magis inepte quam ineleganter," which seems to mean that the style was better than the subject.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 41. 42. The Etruscan and Carthaginian histories were written in Greek: I suspect from this that Claudius's historical works were mostly compilations, or even transcripts. The Latin language probably afforded him no originals on these foreign subjects. Claudius had also some grammatical fancies. He wished to introduce three new letters into the Roman alphabet, the digamma, the psi, and another which is not known. See Lipsius's note on Tac. *Ann.* xi. 14. The  $\gamma$  and  $\psi$  may still be traced on some monuments of this reign, but they did not survive it.

<sup>3</sup> Suetonius (l. c.) mentions a Sulpicius Flavius as assisting, and the great historian Livy as encouraging, him in his historical labours. In the same way we read of Ateius Philologus making historical collections for the use of Sallust and Asinius Pollio. Suet. *de illustr. Gramm.* 10.

the emperor's boon companions were encouraged to make sport of his reputed imbecility. Thus, for instance, if he came at any time late to the imperial supper table, the guests would spread themselves on the couches and keep him standing; if he fell asleep after eating, they would put rough gloves on his hands, to enjoy his confusion when he rubbed his eyes on waking.<sup>1</sup> Such were the consequences at Rome and in the palace of being born of a weakly constitution, and of having suffered from paralysis, of halting on one leg, of trembling in hand and head, and of having perhaps the speech affected with thick and imperfect utterance.<sup>2</sup> Even the good nature which the poor man exhibited under these trials of his temper was turned into ridicule, and denounced as a sign of the weakness of his understanding. That the judgment of one from whom the practical knowledge of men and things had been withheld was not equal to his learning, and that the infirmities of his body affected his powers of decision, his presence of mind, and steadfastness of purpose, may easily be imagined: nevertheless, it may be allowed that in a private station, and anywhere but at Rome, Claudius would have passed muster as a respectable, and not, perhaps, an useless member of society.

The opinion which is here given of this prince's character may possibly be influenced in some degree by the study of his countenance in the numerous busts still existing, which represent it as one of the most interesting of the whole imperial series. If his figure, as we are told, was tall, and when sitting appeared not ungraceful, his face, at least in repose, was eminently handsome.

Claudius affects  
to imitate the  
policy of  
Augustus.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 8. Comp. the satirical *ludus de morte Claudii*, or *Apocolocyntosis* of Seneca (in fin.): "Apparuit subito C. Cæsar, et petere illum in servitutem coepit: producit testes qui illum viderant ab illo flagris, ferulis, oculaphis vapulantem."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 30.; Dion, ix. 2.; Juvenal, vi. 620.: "Tremulum caput . . . manantia labra." Seneca. *Apocol.*: "Bonæ stature, bene canum . . . assidue caput movere, dextrum pedem trahere . . . respondisse nescio quid per turbato sono et voce confusa."

But it is impossible not to remark in it an expression of pain and anxiety which forcibly arrests our sympathy. It is the face of an honest and well-meaning man, who feels himself unequal to the task imposed upon him. There is the look of perplexity in which he may have pored over the mysteries of Etruscan lore, carried to the throne of the world, and engaged in the deepest problems of finance and citizenship. There is the expression of fatigue both of mind and body, which speaks of midnight watches over books, varied with midnight carouses at the imperial table, and the fierce carresses of rival mistresses. There is the glance of fear, not of open enemies, but of pretended friends; the reminiscence of wanton blows, and the anticipation of the deadly potion. Above all, there is the anxious glance of dependence, which seems to cast about for a model to imitate, for ministers to shape a policy, and for satellites to execute it. The model Claudius found was the policy of the venerated Augustus; but his ministers were the most profligate of women, and the most selfish of emancipated slaves. This imitation of the measures of the great founder of the empire is indeed the key to the public policy of the Claudian principate. Both at home and abroad we shall find the new ruler following the lines already traced by his illustrious ancestor; and our examination of his career of sovereignty will place in the strongest light the points of difference between the middle of the eighth century of Rome and its termination.—

I. The commencement of the new reign was marked by the renewed activity of the armies on the frontiers. Servius Galba, confirmed in his command on the Rhine, led his forces across that river into the territory of the Chatti, whom he had found some pretext for visiting with the terror of the Roman arms. Corbulo gained some successes over the Chauci, constructed roads and canals for the further prosecution of his enterprises, and was preparing to accomplish the long-intermitted task of German subjugation, when com-

I. Military enterprises of the reign of Claudius.

manded to desist from so large and perilous an undertaking.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, at the southern extremity of the empire, the majesty of Rome was vindicated against the Maurusians, a people of the still unsettled province of Mauretania.<sup>2</sup> Suetonius Paullinus was the first of the Romans that crossed the range of the Atlas. Penetrating a ten days' march southward, he reached a river which was called the Gir, one of the streams perhaps which fall from the southern slopes of those mountains, and are lost in the sands of the Sahara.<sup>3</sup> But Claudius determined to carry into effect the plan which Augustus had prematurely announced, of an invasion and thorough reduction of the great island of Britain. As his ancestor had proposed to follow in person the steps of Julius Cæsar, so Claudius was not content to leave this important achievement in the hands of his lieutenants, but, untrained as he was to arms, he quitted the cares of administration in the capital, and joined his legions on the further side of the channel.<sup>4</sup> The particulars of this deliberate aggression will deserve to be fully related in another place: it is enough here to say that it was completely successful; and though little resistance was offered, and Claudius himself found no enemy to confront him in the field, it was of sufficient importance to merit the distinction of a triumph, which the emperor claimed, and led with great pomp and ceremony in the year 797. Claudius proved himself not unworthy of the honour, which of all Roman conquerors Sulla and Augustus had alone usurped before him, of extending the limits of the *pomœrium*

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 18, 20. Our authorities do not distinguish between this and the Corbulo who has been mentioned under the reign of Tiberius. I have there shown that they were certainly different persons. Of this Corbulo more will be said on a later occasion.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lx. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* v. 1. This river seems to have been confounded with the Niger, of which the ancients had some vague reports. The size, direction, and periodical swelling of the Niger suggested the idea of its connexion with the Nile, which was not quite extinct in recent times. "Et Gir notissimus amnis Æthiopum, simili mentitus gurgite Nilum." Claudian, *de laud. Sil.* l. 252.

<sup>4</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 17.; Dion, lx. 19. foll.

in token that the frontiers of the empire had been advanced under his auspices.<sup>1</sup>

The foundation of colonies had been one of the great public merits of Augustus. It had gratified the soldiers; it had given independence to many needy citizens; it had proved his personal disinterestedness, in the Foundation of colonies. relinquishment of tracts of tributary domain, and the abandonment of some sources of the imperial revenue. On the other hand, the parsimony of Tiberius had been manifested in his abstaining from these popular benefactions. No colony of Tiberius is mentioned; none of his careless and grasping successor Caius. But Claudius was distinguished among the Roman Emperors by his politic munificence in this particular. It was his ambition to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of the empire;—he restored some impoverished foundations in Italy, and established new colonies in the frontier provinces. The famous cities of Treves, Cologne, and Colchester owe their origin, among others, to his hand, and their celebrity partly perhaps to the wisdom with which he chose their sites, and the bounty with which he endowed them.<sup>2</sup>

From his place between the consuls in the Senate-house, Claudius, as the chief of the Roman people, dispensed crowns to subject potentates with imperial munificence. The suppliants who had thronged the court of Tiberius and Caius were relieved from their painful attendance, and sent to play the tyrant in their turn at home. Antiochus, long a petitioner in the antechamber of the senate, was now restored to the throne of Commagene;

His conduct in regard to foreign affairs.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 23.: "Pomœrium auxit Cæsar, more prisco, quo iis qui protulere imperium, etiam terminos urbis propagare datur. Nec tamen duces Romani, quanquam magnis nationibus subactis, usurpaverant nisi L. Sulla et D. Augustus." Aurel. Victor. *de Cæsar.* 4.: "Retenti fines seu dati imperio Romano." Spanheim traces on the medals of Claudius that he received the title of Imperator no less than twenty-seven times. Spanh. *de usu Num.* ii. 404. Augustus had received it only twenty-one times. Tac. *Ann.* i. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Zumpt, "de coloniis Romanorum militaribus." *Comm. Epigr.* i. 385.

and Mithridates, who claimed descent from the great Eastern hero, received a grant of the kingdom of the Bosphorus, for which Polemo, its recent occupant, was indemnified with a district of Cilicia.<sup>1</sup> The services of Herod Agrippa, who had managed so adroitly to aid in securing the empire for Claudius, received a brilliant and complete reward, not only in the confirmation of his authority in Galilee, but in the addition to his dominions of Samaria and Judea. By the cession of this wealthy province the kingdom of the Great Herod was once more reunited, and constituted far the most important of all the vassal sovereignties of the empire. At the same time the little district of Chalcis in Syria was erected into a principality for a younger brother of Agrippa. The Jews, though they had welcomed the transfer of their country from Antipas and Herodias to the less capricious jurisdiction of a Roman proconsul, accepted this new arrangement with marked satisfaction. Agrippa was personally popular with them, and the memory of the first Herod, tyrant as he was, was still held in admiration by the great body of the people. But besides this, the emperor had accompanied his new dispositions with decrees, in which the impious encroachments of Caius on their national privileges were formally disavowed, the malice of their oppugners in the great Eastern cities restrained, and the free enjoyment of their religious usages specifically confirmed. The return of Agrippa to Palestine and his entry into Jerusalem was a national triumph. He studied to retain the approbation of his subjects by acts of munificence, and flattered their pride by his show of independence. But when he ventured on the royal act of extending and strengthening the fortifications of his capital, he was sternly reminded of the realities of his position by the interdict of the proconsul of Syria, and compelled to desist. Nor could the circumstances of his own kingdom suffer him to forget that his subjects were divided into two rival parties, whose claims he was required constantly to compro-

<sup>1</sup> Dion, ix. 8.

mise, and whom he could hardly hope, with all his craft, to combine into a nation of common and united sentiments. While the Jewish element, bent fanatically on the maintenance of its ancient customs, and jealous of every transgression of its cherished principles, expected him to conform strictly to its religious rites, to court its priesthood, and offer sacrifice in its temples, the Pagans and Hellenizers, hardly less numerous or powerful, elevated him above all laws and usages, and pressed on him with impetuous zeal the attributes of divinity. At Jerusalem Agrippa enacted the Jew with solemn gait and tragic countenance, amidst general acclamation; but at Cæsarea he allowed the more genial part of the Greek to be imposed on him. It was at a festival in this Hellenic capital, after an harangue he had addressed to the populace, that they shouted, *It is the voice of a god, not of a man.* His mirth was turned into Death of Herod Agrippa. sadness. He was smitten at the same instant with a sore disease, and died after a few days' illness, at the premature age of fifty-four.<sup>1</sup> This unexpected catastrophe seems to have unhinged the plans of the Roman government. So important a charge as the sovereignty of Palestine could be intrusted only to a tried servant of the emperor; and even Agrippa had given cause of jealousy by the relations he had cultivated with the princes on his frontier. None of his family merited to succeed him. His brother Herod was allowed to continue in the obscure dignity of his petty chiefdom, and his son Agrippa, already resident as a hostage in Rome, was retained there in honourable custody; while the dominions of the great Idumean reverted once more to the control of the proconsul of Syria, and acquiesced, with a few uneasy murmurs, in its full incorporation with the empire.

II. From the day that the first Cæsar fell beneath the daggers of a senatorial faction, it had become a tradition of the state to regard the senate as the natural counterpoise to the emperor, and as a rival whom it was necessary for him to amuse with flatteries,

II. Claudius maintains the dignity of the senate.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 8.: *Act. Apost.* xii., A. V. 797. A. D. 44.



or control by force. The mutual jealousy of these two co-ordinate authorities, long kept in check by the discretion of Augustus, had been exasperated by a sense of mutual wrong under Tiberius, and had broken out in furious violence under his overbearing successor. But Claudius, on his accession, freely acknowledged that the overthrow of Caius by a just retribution had convinced him of the folly of all hostile demonstrations, and he solemnly proclaimed his intention of constituting the senate the friend and confidant of his own administration.<sup>1</sup>

It was a fundamental principle of the Roman municipal polity that the citizen should contribute in his person, the subject in his means, to the service of the state.

After the example of Augustus, he revises the list of the order.

The great problem of statesmen was to make these two obligations balance one another; to compensate the commonwealth for the immunity from taxation of a portion of its children by laying on them the most onerous and important employments. The members of the senate were made responsible for the discharge of the highest magistracies; but in order that these offices should be adequately filled by men of fortune equal to their expense, and of consideration suitable to their dignity, it was necessary to maintain this functionary reservoir constantly at the same exalted level, to prevent it sinking from the poverty or meanness of its individual members too low to furnish the required supply. Hence, the expediency of the frequent revisions of the list of the senate, such as, under the republic, had been executed by the censors at rapidly recurring intervals, and had been repeated more than once by Augustus. But the last of these solemn inquisitions, on which the eyes of the citizens had always turned with intense and even superstitious interest, had taken place as far back as the year 757.<sup>2</sup> Tiberius had shrunk from the labour

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* ii. 11. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, iv. 13. This seems to have been the last extraordinary *Lectio Senatus*: but probably the censure of the year 767, just before Augustus's death, did not pass without some special cases of removal.

or the odium of renewing them. Caius had wantonly neglected to do so. It was left for Claudius, whose mind teemed with antique prepossessions, and who was appalled by no drudgery, to follow the example of the founder of the empire, and consolidate afresh the basis of the civil administration. The fierce independence of the fathers had been tamed by indolence or fear, and we hear no more on this occasion of the resentment of the expelled members, or the murmurs of the body in general. Claudius demanded of them a true statement of their means, and insisted on their possessing the requisite qualification; nor can we suppose that he neglected the show at least of inquiring into their manner of life, and visiting with condemnation such as appeared unworthy to stand at the head of Roman society. But he was mild and temperate in the exercise of his authority. Having no political factions to court or intimidate, he had no need to expose himself to the charge of political partiality; and he showed himself liberal in supplying the needs of noble but impoverished families. Nevertheless, this revision thinned the benches of the Curia, and showed the citizens but too plainly that the progress of affairs, even since the time of Cæsar and Augustus, had concentrated wealth in few hands, and swept many illustrious houses into obscurity. To remedy this evil, to obliterate the traces of this social revolution, Claudius proposed to call up to the senate the wealthiest of the knights and even of lower ranks.<sup>1</sup> Nor did he confine his view within the limits of Italy. The senate had already received accessions from Spain, Africa, the Narbonensis, and other provinces. The *Jus Honorum*, or claim of admission to the senate and the magistracies, which were filled from the senate or served themselves to replenish it, had been formerly conceded to the citizens of many foreign communities by Cæsar, Pompeius, and Augustus. The principle thus acknowledged awaited

He supplies vacancies from the wealthiest families in the provinces.

He opens the career of honours to the Gauls.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 25.; Dion, lx. 29.

further extension, on fitting occasions, from every new ruler; and Claudius had both precedent and expediency in his favour when he decreed its application to the whole of Gallia Comata, or at least, as the first step in the process, to the *Ædui*, the first Gallic ally of Rome, the friends and brothers, as they had been styled, of the Roman people. This preference of the Gauls over other subjects was justified by their tried fidelity during the period which had elapsed since their conquest. It was tendered as a boon at the close of their first century of submission. But it was really owing to the favour with which the emperor regarded their country as his own birthplace, and still more, perhaps, to the intimate relations his father and brother had held with it during their long administration there. The measure was received indeed with some murmurs of discontent: undoubtedly it deserved to be explained more luculently, both as to its motives and anticipated results, than in the rambling and inconclusive arguments actually used by its propounder, as we may judge from the fragment of the speech in which he recommended it, preserved on a brazen tablet which was discovered three centuries ago at Lyons.<sup>1</sup> But its advantages required in fact no imperial expositor. On the one hand, the attraction of provincial notabilities to Rome might be regarded as a security for the faithful service of the connexions they left behind; on the other, the wants and interests of the province might thus be brought directly to the knowledge of the imperial city itself: in short, it was a step towards the fusion of the two great elements of society at the time, an advance in the development of political unity,

<sup>1</sup> See the contents of the "*Tabula aenea dux Lugduni eruta ad latus S. Sebastiani, A. 1529, quæ Claudii Imp. orationem continet super civitate Gallis danda,*" in an excursion of Lipsius to Tac. *Ann.* xi. 23. They have been published with a commentary by Zell in Germany, according to Hoeck's references: but I have not seen the tract myself. It is curious to compare this genuine transcript of the emperor's words with the paraphrase, if such it may be called, of Tacitus (*Ann.* xi. 24.); which is important, as showing what degree of authenticity may be claimed for the speeches and conversations he attributes to his characters.

and as such it assisted in the genial task of riveting the sympathies of the world together. At a later period another happy consequence appeared, in the effect produced on the higher classes at Rome by the simpler tastes of these representatives of provincial manners. The senseless extravagance of the children of the conquerors, and their vile imitation of the Greeks and Orientals, were shamed by the decent self-respect of the yet uncorrupted barbarians.<sup>1</sup>

The order thus revised and rendered worthy of its imperial functions was required to apply with assiduity to its duties, and fresh penalties were assigned to indolence and absence. The senate evinced its renewed activity under this reign by the promulgation of a great variety of laws. The second or equestrian order was subjected to a similar inquisition, and refreshed once more with the infusion of baser blood.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding the creation of new patrician houses by Augustus, this caste, to which some of the most solemn religious functions appertained, continued to dwindle away, and required additional grafts.<sup>3</sup> The effects of luxury, of vice and celibacy, had proved more fatal than the sword of the executioner. But all these causes combined to decimate the ancient families; and we observe, more and more, the rise of new names into distinction, and lose sight in the same proportion of old and cherished appellatives.<sup>4</sup> In order to carry out these reforms, Claudius assumed

Claudius revises the list of the knights.

Censorship of Claudius.  
A. U. 800.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* iii. 55.: "Novi homines e municipiis et coloniis atque etiam provinciis in Senatum crebro assumpti domesticam parcimoniam intulerunt."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 16.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 25.: "Paucis jam reliquis familiarum quas Romulus majorum et L. Brutus minorum gentium appellaverant; exhaustis etiam quas dictator Cæsar lege Cassia et princeps Augustus lege Sænia sublegere."

<sup>4</sup> The barbarism of the double gentile name seems to appear first about this period, as in the grammarian Remmius Fannius Palæmon, originally a slave. We meet with the same in Nævius Sertorius, and also in Milonia Cæsonia. This usage may owe its origin to adoption, the name of both the original and the adoptive gens being now often retained in conjunction. From this time the double appellative occurs very frequently. At first the names so conjoined

the censorship in 800, and held a lustrum.<sup>1</sup> Augustus, as we have seen, when he performed this solemnity, had abstained from adopting the title of Censor. Whatever his motive for this innovation may have been, his successor was more punctilious in preserving the name, together with the functions of the office. The enumeration of the citizens on this occasion gave a result of 5,984,072 males of military age, which may imply a total Roman population of not less than 25,419,066.<sup>2</sup> Thirty-four years before the return amounted to only 4,897,000, or a total of about 17,400,000; and this considerable difference is not to be accounted for by the mere increase of population in the course of a single generation. While, however, it may be taken as evidence, in some degree, of the general prosperity which is for the most part indicated by a rapid increase of births over deaths, we must consider it also as a result of the fresh introductions into the class of citizens which were in progress under Tiberius and Caius. This increase was still more developed under the next principate. It is probable that Claudius conferred the boon on many communities as well as individuals; and it is not impossible that both he and Caius made a traffic of it for their private advantage. Such, at all events, was undoubtedly the case with his ministers and favourites, many of whom amassed enormous fortunes by procuring the franchise from their master for wealthy applicants. The Roman citizen was still exempt from the most onerous requisitions of the state, the poll and land tax; and the twentieth on successions was lightened to him when the property descended

were generally obscure ones; at a later period we shall be startled by a Julius Calpurnius, an Ælius Aurelius, a Claudius Rutilius, a Flavius Valerius Aurelius, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 13, 25.; Suet. *Claud.* 16.; Dion, ix. 29.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* x. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Tacitus (l. c.) compared with the somewhat different statement of Eusebius. For the proportion of males between 17 and 60 to the sum of a population, see Clinton, *Fast. Hell.* iii. 457, 461. Hoeck, *Rom. Gesch.* i. 2. 286.

in a direct line.<sup>1</sup> The sale of the franchise by the emperor was in fact no other than the spendthrift's economy; it was living upon the capital of the state. The fatal extravagance of the system was first perceived at a somewhat later period, and we shall see some checks put on the claim to immunity by succeeding emperors.

III. Nor did the example of Augustus fail to remind his various imitator that the care of the national religion is among the first duties of the conservative reformer. Claudius promptly acquiesced in the general disgust with which the impieties of Caius had been regarded. The assumption of the special attributes of divinity, the club of Hercules, and the thyrsus of Bacchus, and the caricature of the national deities, which had disgraced the last reign, found no favour or indulgence from him. The Orientalism which had pervaded the court and sanctuary under the disciple of Agrippa, was swept sternly away by the historian of Etruria. In other matters the measures of Claudius, as chief of the state religion, seem to have been generally practical and useful. He limited the number of holidays, which were become a serious impediment to business; but as regarded the foreign cults which had so often intruded into the city, and been so often banished from it, he contented himself with proscribing such only as seemed politically dangerous. The Jews, who had been expelled by Tiberius, but who seem to have lately recovered their position there through the influence of Agrippa, were treated with indulgence, till the disturbances they excited by seditions or domestic dissensions caused them to be chased once more from the city.<sup>2</sup> The spirit of the antiquarian was again visible in the treaty Claudius contracted with Agrippa by the sacrifice of a swine in the forum; in his restoration of the expiatory offerings of Servius in the grove of Diana; and in his proposing to appoint a senatorial com-

III. Measures for the conservation of the national religion.

<sup>1</sup> See Dion, iv. 25., and Gierig's explanation of Plin. *Paneg.* 39.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 25.: "Judæos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit." On this celebrated passage more will be said hereafter.

mission to examine the conduct and efficiency of the Haruspical discipline.<sup>1</sup> The chief pontiff celebrated the completion of the eighth century with the ceremony of secular games. But in this his vanity seems to have prevailed over his literary prepossessions, for he could not but have been aware that the Etruscan Sæculum bore no reference to a period of an hundred years; nor, in fact, had more than sixty-three years elapsed since Augustus had summoned the Romans to behold a solemnity *which none then living had before seen, and none should ever see again.*<sup>2</sup>

IV. Among other merits which history has ascribed to Augustus was the sedulous industry with which, after the manner of the old patricians, he had occupied himself with dispensing justice to the citizens. The patient application of his laborious follower was eminently conspicuous in this practice also.

Sometimes in the open forum, sometimes in the neighbouring basilicas, Claudius, old and infirm as he was, would endure from hour to hour, every day of business, the drudgery of judicial investigations, and give at least decent attention to the clamorous appeals of the advocates, who, emboldened by his unexampled patience and good nature, would venture not unfrequently to worry and even insult him. So little did he spare himself in this irksome duty, that his measure for curtailing the numerous non-days of the calendar was ascribed to a wish to gain more time for the labours of the tribunals.<sup>3</sup> When, after a long morning sitting, he arose at last for refreshment,—even if, as on one occasion, the odour of a pontifical banquet, prepared in the adjoining temple, served

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xi. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. xi. 11.; Plin. Hist. Nat. vii. 48. The secular games of Augustus were A. U. 737; those of Claudius A. U. 800. "Quare vox præconia irrita est, invitantis more solemnibus ad ludos, quos nec spectasset quisquam, nec spectaturus esset: quum superessent adhuc qui spectaverant, et histrionum, producti olim, tunc quoque producerentur." Suet. Claud. 21.; Plin. l. c.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. Claud. 14, 15.; Dion. lx. 4, 17. Comp. the satirical *Apocatacynosis*: "Si memoria repetis, ego eram qui tibi ante templum tuum jus dicebam totis diebus mense Julio et Augusto."

to hasten his movements,—the petitioners for a hearing would sometimes obstruct his passage and cling about his person, till he meekly resumed his seat, and devoted the afternoon also to their affairs.<sup>1</sup> However this passion for judicial functions might be open to caricature, and however his intellectual infirmities might betray themselves in occasional haste, frivolity, or indecision, the conduct of Claudius seems to have been actuated by a sincerely beneficent intention, and shows beyond dispute the principles of moderation and equity which distinguished him. A man can hardly be naturally a tyrant who takes pleasure in meting out justice, and deciding questions of right. It was with real satisfaction therefore, we may believe, that Claudius suppressed the laws of majesty, and forbade the practice of delation; that he relinquished the most grievous exactions of his predecessor; that he promised never to subject a Roman citizen to torture; that he declined to raise the festivals of his house to the dignity of national solemnities. When he repressed the encroachments of the freedmen, and caused false pretenders to the franchise to be capitally punished, and again when he withdrew the liberty which Calus had allowed to slaves of giving evidence against their masters, he consulted principles of Roman law to which the citizens attached considerable importance. It was not in the interests of humanity, but of a jealous and inquisitorial policy, that such indulgences had been granted, and it gave occasion to intolerable licence. The justice indeed of Claudius was little tempered with mercy. Under his reign more parricides, it was said, were adjudged to the ancient punishment of the sack than in all the ages that had elapsed before it.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, one of his enactments at least remains to show that his views with respect to the servile population were milder and more enlightened than those of previous legislators. He ordained that the sick slaves exposed in the temple of Æsculapius should, if they recovered, obtain their freedom; but the

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 18, 33.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 34.; Senec. *de Clem.* i. 23.



masters who ridded themselves of their obligations to the old and infirm by actually putting them to death, as may have been sometimes done, he declared guilty of murder. We may hope that this, the only recorded instance of his consideration for that degraded caste, was in fact but a single specimen of a more extensive legislation.<sup>1</sup>

V. In the construction of enormous works of magnificence or utility the Romans beheld the most flattering reflection of their own greatness. The undertakings of Claudius were not unworthy of this colossal age of material creations; yet they were not the mere fantastic conceptions of turgid pride and unlimited power. The aqueduct begun, as we have seen, by Caius, was completed, after several years' labour, by his successor, from whom it derived the name of Claudian, by which it was thenceforth distinguished. This channel secured for the city the purest and most abundant of all its supplies of water, and enriched the populace with the cheapest and most useful of its luxuries. The charges which have been made against Caius, of withdrawing first the vessels, and afterwards the carts and waggons of Italy from their ordinary employment in conveying food to the population, and of leaving Rome at his death with no more than a week's consumption of grain in store, though involving probably considerable misrepresentation, seem, nevertheless, to have been grounded on the scarcity which actually broke out more than once, and lasted for several years, during the government of his successor. It must be considered among the difficulties with which the feeble old man had to contend, and it may serve to enhance our idea of the merits of his laborious administration, that he received from the selfish tyrant before him the legacy of empty granaries, as well as an exhausted treasury.<sup>2</sup> It is not impossible that the senate's ready acquiescence in the

V. Material  
constructions  
of Claudius.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 25.: "Quod si quis necare mallet quem quam exponere, cædis crimine teneri." Comp. Dion, lx. 13, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Aurel. Victor, *de Cæsar* 4.; Senec. *de Brev. Vit.* 18.; C. Cæsar "decēbat . . . septem aut octo dierum cibaria superesse."

choice of the prætorians was determined by the prospect of a famine in the city, a popular riot, and a servile insurrection; and the republicans of the day may well have consented to waive their speculative principles in favour of an emperor, at a moment when the tribes and centuries of antiquity would have demanded the creation of a dictator. It has been seen that the Alexandrian corn ships came to anchor at Puteoli, more than an hundred miles from the place of their cargo's destination. Such was the want of harbours or secure roadsteads along the strand of Latium, that it was only the smaller coasting vessels of Gaul or Spain that could venture to run to land at any nearer point. The mouth of the Tiber had become nearly choked up by the accumulation of sand, and the few vessels that now sought the quays of Ostia were generally obliged to ride at anchor in the offing. The engineers despaired of clearing and keeping open a passage in the main stream of the river; but they now, under the direction of Claudius, resorted to the plan of cutting a new channel from the right bank, a little above the deserted harbour, and constructing an artificial haven, with the aid of two moles advanced into the sea. The entrance was illuminated by a light-house; and from henceforth, as long as science and industry survived in the capital of the world, the vessels which supplied it with its first necessary could come by day or by night to a safe and convenient anchorage, and transfer their freight to the barges, to be propelled against the descending current by the labour of men or horses.<sup>1</sup> To this haven was given the name of Portus Romanus or Portus Augusti, to distinguish it from the now neglected establishment of Ostia. Claudius himself deserves the entire credit of this bold and salutary undertaking; for he persisted in it notwithstanding the remonstrances of his timid engineers, and the great outlay it required. Its importance was speedily shown; for in

The Portus Romanus, or new harbour at Ostia.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 20.: Dion, ix. 11.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* ix. 5., xvi. 76. § 2. An immense vessel, which Caius had constructed to convey an obelisk from Alexandria to Rome, was sunk to form the foundation of the mole.

the eleventh year of his reign the empire was visited by a scarcity, which seems to have followed on the failure of the crops throughout the provinces, and redoubled exertions were required to save the capital from famine. Rome was in an uproar; the multitude surrounded the emperor in the forum, and assailed him with the most violent gestures.<sup>1</sup> The precautions of Augustus on similar occasions, with the expulsion of foreigners from the city, were again resorted to. The importation of grain into Rome required more method and attention than had hitherto been given to it; and the completion of a harbour to which corn could be brought at all seasons, was wisely followed by a measure to encourage the construction of ships of greater size than had usually been employed in the trade.

Another undertaking, though its object was merely of local utility, deserves to be recorded for its magnitude. The Marsians had represented to Augustus the disasters to which their country was liable from the swelling of the waters of the Fucinus, a basin among their mountains in the heart of Italy, nearly thirty miles in circumference, which receives the drainage of several valleys, but has no apparent natural outlet. Among the limestone hills which encircle it there are probably subterranean clefts through which, as in other regions of similar formation, a portion of its waters drains away; but they are not capable of expansion with the increase of volume within, and in seasons unusually wet the lake overflowed the lips of its crater, submerging a great extent of valuable land. The tunnel by which the superfluous waters of the Alban lake, a much smaller reservoir, are still carried off was a work of the early Republic. But this emissary is little more than a mile in length, while the perforation required for the Fucinus, which Augustus shrank from undertaking, was not less than

The emissary  
of the lake Fu-  
cinus.

<sup>1</sup> Four famines are specially mentioned as occurring in this reign:—1. at Rome in the first and second year; 2. in Judea in the fourth; 3. in Greece in the ninth; 4. at Rome in the eleventh. Brotier on Tac. *Ann.* xii. 43. Comp. Suet. *Claud.* 18.; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xx. 2. 5.; *Act. Apost.* xi. 28.

three. Claudius however was not deterred by difficulties which labour and money could surmount. He did not, perhaps, stop to calculate with accuracy the real utility of the work. He commanded it to be done, and his command was executed; but it occupied thirty thousand men for eleven years, an amount of labour which no doubt might have been more profitably employed in many other ways. Unlike the Alban tunnel, which has continued to discharge its waters without intermission for two and twenty centuries, the emissary of the Fucinus fell speedily into decay, and required to be repaired and restored to efficiency by a later emperor. It has now been completely choked up for many hundreds of years, and the meadows on the shelving bank of the lake are still subject, as in ancient times, to the caprices of the seasons.<sup>1</sup>

VI. Measures for the amusement of the populace may properly be mentioned next after such as were intended for its well being; for in view of the Roman administrator the two were of co-ordinate and almost equal necessity. If, on the one hand, he provided the people with cheap corn, on the other, that they might have no reasonable pretext for discontent, he was careful to furnish them with the unfailing excitement of magnificent public exhibitions. Accordingly, if Claudius executed immense works of engineering, for supplying the metropolis with water, for securing the access of her richly-freighted flotillas, or for averting a periodical inundation, not less was he required to watch with simulated interest the long-protracted combats of men and beasts, in which the multitude expected their ruler to share their own barbarous satisfaction. We have already admired the patience with which Augustus submitted to this tax on his time and temper. Tiberius, we have seen, could not school his stubborn mind to a similar sacrifice. Caius shared the vulgar taste for brutal excitement, and in this instance, at least, could court popularity

VI. Measures  
for the amuse-  
ment of the  
citizens.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 20.; Dion, ix. 11.

while he gratified his own appetite. Claudius, patient and plodding by nature, regarded this condescension as a legitimate portion of the routine to which he had devoted himself; and he sate through the weary hours of popular amusement without interest, it may be believed, but, at the same time, without disgust. His constitutional insensibility did not even require the rest and diversion of mind which were com-

The gladiatorial shows.

monly demanded even by the mass of the populace. In the shows of the amphitheatre, after the morning exhibitions, there was an interval allowed for rest or refreshment, during which the spectators retired for the most part from the spot, to resume their places at a later hour. Claudius, it was observed, rarely availed himself of this respite. His bodily infirmities perhaps made him averse from change and motion, and he was content to retain his seat in the imperial tribune, and witness the interludes of rope-dancing and jugglers' feats, which formed a languid entertainment in the intervals of blood-shed. It is said, indeed, that he was not satisfied with these innocent recreations, and sometimes called for a fresh supply of gladiators to fill the hours of suspense.<sup>1</sup> If, at least, the spectators made the demand, he would comply with it with his usual apathy. The general taste for these spectacles was increasing, and under Claudius it certainly received no check. He suffered himself indeed to be made the tool of the popular humour here as elsewhere, condescending to bandy coarse jokes with the multitude, and degrading the majesty of empire to the level of vulgar buffoonery; nor can we resist the testimony of our authorities to his brutal indifference to human suffering, and his morbid curiosity in scrutinizing, and as it were analysing it in his victims.<sup>2</sup>

Augustus had exhibited a mock sea-fight in the basin he constructed on the bank of the Tiber, and Claudius directed

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 34.; Dion, lx. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. l. c.: "Sævum et sanguinarium natura fuisse, magnis minimisque apparuit rebus. Tormenta questionum . . . exigebat coram . . . jugulari jubebat ut expirantium facies videret."

a show of siege operations, and the storming of a city, in the meadows of the Campus Martius; but we do not read that on either of these occasions the illusion was carried to the extent of actual bloodshed. It was very different, however, with the extraordinary spectacle which Claudius, towards the close of his reign, Grand spectacle of a sea-fight on the lake Fucina. paraded on the Fucine lake, to celebrate the completion of his work there, and the first admission of its water into the tunnel he had constructed. He summoned the population of Rome and Italy to witness from the surrounding hills the manœuvres of two fleets of triremes and quadriremes, manned by armies of gladiators, while vessels filled with soldiers were posted on the shores to prevent desertion, and cut off retreat. One authority estimates the opposing armaments at twelve vessels each, another at fifty; while Tacitus, whose numbers are not generally excessive, declares that the combatants engaged were as many as nineteen thousand, and that the whole circuit of the lake was lined with the flotilla which guarded them; an exaggeration manifestly of the most flagrant kind. Refinements of luxury formed a horrid combination with the atrocity of the spectacle. Claudius, armed and cloaked as an Emperor, with his consort in a military mantle by his side, seated himself on a throne overlooking the waters, attended by senators, knights, and soldiers. The combatants, who were styled Sicilians and Rhodians, defiled before him, and saluted him; and when he graciously returned their greeting, it was understood as an intimation that the contest was not intended to be mortal.<sup>1</sup> When the vessels were drawn up in array, the figure of a Triton in silver was made to emerge suddenly from the lake, and sound the signal for engagement. They went through the manœuvres of a sham fight, advancing and retreating, striking and rebounding from each other; but the emperor, we are told, was not satisfied with this peaceful display, and ordered the attack to commence in earnest. Dion assures us

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 21.: "Ave imperator, morituri te salutant."

that, when the men hesitated to destroy one another, he caused his own flotilla to charge, and cut them in pieces. Suetonius, more soberly, only suggests that he thought of doing so; but Tacitus here at least is more moderate than either of his compeers, and announces that, *after many wounds*, the combatants were separated and dismissed. Such remarkable discrepancies in the relation of a matter of such patent notoriety may put us on our guard against many astounding anecdotes of their times with which these authors perplex and provoke us.<sup>1</sup>

In reading of the shattered health and frame of the prince who was raised unwillingly to the throne from his desk, at a period far beyond the middle of life, untrained for government, and with no natural bent towards affairs, we cannot but admire the force of the Roman character, which appears to have borne this feeble creature through labours which might task the highest powers and the happiest disposition. Yet this incessant strain of mind and body seems to have been favourable to his health, which recovered its tone under the labours of the principate. The wear and tear of a life so trying required no doubt the support of stimulants; the excess in eating and drinking to which Claudius is said to have been addicted, and which has made his name notorious for gluttony, was at first perhaps no more than indulgence of the craving which his exhausted powers naturally excited. Encouraged by the artifice of the wives and parasites who ruled him, he lapsed more and more into gross intemperance, and the pains of indigestion, from which he suffered so acutely as to meditate, it was said, escaping from them by suicide, were caused, we may believe, by this habitual abuse.<sup>2</sup> His jaded appetite was excited by

Personal intemperance attributed to Claudius.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 56.; Suet. *Claud.* 21.; Dion, lx. 33. It seems to have been in connexion with this exhibition that Claudius gave a banquet at the head of the emissary, at which the sudden rush of the water into the tunnel before the proper moment was very near causing a frightful catastrophe. Tacitus, c. 57.; Suet. c. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 31.

the splendour of his banquets and the numbers of the company: his viands were often spread in ample halls or pleasure grounds, and his couches crowded by many hundreds of guests. On such occasions he gratified his senses to the utmost, and seldom rose from table till he had gorged to repletion, and required to relieve his stomach by vomiting. In judging of the character of the poor old man, whose private failings have been elevated into notoriety, some allowance must be made for the coarseness of the times, and the ordinary licence of his associates. Nor must we forget how readily the scandalous anecdotes of the day were accepted by annalists and biographers as veritable history. With regard to women, the intemperance of which he is accused may be almost confined to the ease with which he passed from the caresses of one lawful wife to those of a successor: of all the Cæsars Claudius stands, on the whole, the most nearly free from the charge of illicit and disgraceful indulgences.<sup>1</sup> But now for the first time at Rome the story of the prince's wives becomes the history of the principate; the city of Scipio and Augustus recedes for a moment from our view, and we seem to stray, as in a wayward dream, through the saloons of Versailles or Aranjuez.

<sup>1</sup> *Supt. Claud.* 33. Two of his female favourites are named by Tacitus (*Ann.* xi. 30.), and Dion has a passing remark on his intemperance with regard both to wine and women. But the particulars of his alleged excesses, from which his gluttony has become so generally infamous, are confined to the scandalous chronicle of his biographer.



## CHAPTER L.

CLAUDIUS SUBJECT TO THE INFLUENCE, 1. OF WOMEN: HIS WIVES: MESSALINA.

2. OF FREEDMEN: POLYBIUS, NARCISSUS, ETC.—TREATMENT OF THE SISTERS OF CAIUS.—BANISHMENT OF SENECA.—DEATH OF APPIUS SILANUS.—CONSPIRACY OF EURICOMIANUS.—INVASION OF BRITAIN AND TRIUMPH OF CLAUDIUS.—DEATH OF VALERIUS ASIATICUS.—INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF CLAUDIUS.—RIVALRY OF MESSALINA AND AGRIPPINA.—MESSALINA'S AMOUR WITH SILLIUS, AND DARING MARRIAGE WITH HIM.—ALARM AND ANGER OF CLAUDIUS.—HER DISGRACE AND DEATH.—INTRIGUES FOR A SUCCESSOR.—CLAUDIUS MARRIES AGRIPPINA.—HER SON DOMITIUS RETROTHED TO HIS DAUGHTER OCTAVIA: ADOPTED UNDER THE NAME OF NERO.—INFLUENCE OF AGRIPPINA: SHE FOUNDS THE CODONIA AGRIPPINENSIS.—ADVANCING POPULARITY OF NERO.—AGRIPPINA REVERTS THE DESTRUCTION OF LEPIDA.—SHE POISONS CLAUDIUS.—NERO SUCCEEDS TO POWER.—REMARKS ON THE CHARACTER OF CLAUDIUS.—THE ADORATION PAID HIM DURING HIS LIFE BY SENECA, AND ABUSE OF HIM AFTER HIS DEATH.—THE APOCOCYNTOSIS.—FLATTERY OF NERO. (A. U. 794–807. A. D. 41–54.)

THE ruler to whom the conduct of affairs was now entrusted had been bred, beyond the usual term of infancy, by the women of the imperial household; for the weakness of his sickly frame still required the care of female nursing at an age when the young Roman was ordinarily transferred to his tutors and the masters of his athletic exercises. To the last he continued to feel the need of the petty attentions and ministrations of the gentler sex. In early adolescence his guardians proposed to provide for his domestic comfort by espousing him to consorts of their own selection; but of those who were successively chosen for the honour two were lost to him before marriage; the one being rejected on account of the offence her parents had given to Augustus, the other dying

Claudius subjected to the influence of women.

untowardly on the day appointed for the nuptials.<sup>1</sup> Claudius was at last united to Plautia Urgulanilla, who, to judge from the names she thus combined, was the daughter perhaps of Plautius Silvanus, a distinguished commander in Pannonia, whose tragic story has been related under the principate of Tiberius, and was descended from Urgulania, the proudest of the friends of Livia.<sup>2</sup> By this noble bride Claudius became the father of two children: the first of them was the Drusus to whom the daughter of Sejanus was affianced almost at his birth, and who died in infancy; the second was a girl, and received the name of Claudia. But when her mother was detected intriguing with a freedman of the household, and repudiated by her husband, Claudius disowned the infant, and shocked the Romans by causing it, at the age of five months, to be ruthlessly abandoned.<sup>3</sup> By Ælia Petina, the daughter perhaps of Ælius Tubero, to whom he next united himself, he had one child only, whom he called after his mother Antonia, and who became affianced to Cnæus Pompeius Magnus the son of a Crassus, who thus, by a strange favour of fortune, combined a descent from two triumvirs, with an alliance with the families of three others.<sup>4</sup> The union with Petina lasted probably some years; and it was in the reign of Caius, as we may suppose, that Claudius divorced himself from her on some trifling disagreement. A third marriage with Valeria Messalina speedily followed: the two children she bore him came into the world towards the com-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 26. The first was Æmilia Lepida, the great granddaughter of Augustus, being the child of his granddaughter Julia by L. Paullus, and sister of M. Æmilius Lepidus, the friend and victim of Caius Caligula; the second, Livia Medullina, of the family of the Camilli.

<sup>2</sup> For Plautius Silvanus, see Tac. *Ann.* iv. 22.; Vell. ii. 112.; Dion, iv. 34. He was the grandson of Urgulania, the friend of Livia.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 27. It seems not unlikely that this horrid act was perpetrated in imitation of Augustus, who forbade the infant of the younger Julia to be nourished. But to cast away a child which had once been *taken up*, was an abuse of the paternal authority from which the feelings of the Romans revolted.

<sup>4</sup> For Ælius Tubero see Tac. *Ann.* xii. 1.

mencement of his principate.<sup>1</sup> The shamelessness of the women of the higher ranks has been noticed on former occasions: the precariousness of the position they held in marriage seems to have made them despair of acquiring, or at least of long retaining, domestic influence; and they too often abandoned themselves to indulgences, from which they had no motives either of affection or prudence to withhold them. Of all the Roman matrons, however, Messalina has acquired the most infamous celebrity: her name has been used even to our own times as the greatest byword of reproach to her sex; the satirist has striven in vain to influence the glowing colours which the historian has flashed upon her crimes. As the wife of a man whom she probably despised, it would seem absurd to suppose that she put any unusual check on the wanton passions of her class; yet we may see reason hereafter to question, at least to their full extent, the enormities for which she has been so signally notorious.

Messalina was the daughter of Valerius Messala Barbatus, sometimes called also Messalinus, who stood in the relation of cousin to Claudius by marriage; for his wife, Domitia Lepida, was a granddaughter, while Claudius was himself the grandson, of the triumvir Antonius. This Lepida seems to have been herself dissolute as well as ambitious, and such were the qualities which descended from her to her child.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless Messalina,

Character and  
influence of  
Messalina.

<sup>1</sup> The son, who received a few years after his birth the surname of Britannicus, had completed, according to Tacitus, his fourteenth year in 808 (*Ann.* xiii. 15.), and was therefore born A. V. 794: if, however, he was only two years younger than Nero (see *Ann.* xii. 25.), he must have been born as early as 792 or 793. Suetonius also contradicts himself in saying that the child was born on the 20th day after his father's accession (i. e. in Feb. 794), and in his second consulship; for this did not commence till 795. I take the middle of these dates, viz. Feb. 794. It does not appear whether the daughter, called Octavia, was older or younger than her brother.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 64. Domitia Lepida was sister to Cn. Domitius, the husband, as will be afterwards recorded, of Agrippina minor, and father of the Emperor Nero. She was daughter to L. Domitius by Antonia major, according to Suetonius,—minor, according to Tacitus, less correctly,—and, therefore, grand-

at the time when she consented to attach herself to the fortunes of Claudius, could have had no prospect of a throne. However little she may have regarded her husband, she clung no doubt to the position she had acquired with him, all the more vehemently as it was strange and unexpected, and her most earnest efforts, her vices and her crimes, would be directed, we may suppose, to securing it. Whatever may have been the irregularity of her conduct, it was doubtless her wish to disguise it from him, and she succeeded in keeping him convinced, at least to the last moment, of her entire devotedness. But his character was too weak to allow her to put entire trust in his convictions: he was, in fact, constantly swayed by the influence of one or another of those about him; the whisper of a friend or courtier might blast her dearest schemes, and her intrigues were directed to securing in her interest the persons by whom he was most closely surrounded. For this purpose, we are assured, she amassed money and she lavished favours. She joined with the ministers of the court in selling appointments to the wealthiest applicants, in extorting bribes by threats and prosecutions, in procuring the confiscation of the estates of nobles, and persuading the emperor to bestow them on herself; thus enriched, she sought to bind her accomplices to her side by dividing her plunder with them, and entangling them in her fascinating caresses. Perilous as such a guilty commerce was, she carried it on with boldness and success, and continued during several years to enjoy the full confidence of her husband, while she closed the lips both of her paramours and victims. But the connexion in which she may thus have placed herself with the freedmen of the palace, the real ministers of the court and instruments of the imperial pleasure, has proved fatal at least to her reputation with posterity. Whatever were her vices and domestic treasons, they might have been overlooked perhaps by historians, who

daughter of the triumvir Antonius and Octavia. *Comp. Tac. Ann. iv. 44.*  
*Suet. Ner. 5.*

were generally content to rebuke the petulance and ambition of women with a contemptuous sneer;<sup>1</sup> but no infamy could be too atrocious to charge upon the matron who was guilty of a criminal association with a Polybius or Narcissus, the vile Grecian ministers of a Roman emperor, the men who sounded a lower depth even in the depths of delation, by sacrificing the best blood of Quirinus to the cupidity of branded and base-born foreigners.

The regimen of women who trafficked in offices of state, an enormity hitherto unknown in Rome, might have been regarded as the last degradation of the common-wealth, had it not been followed by the still more degrading regimen of freedmen. Next to his women it was by his freedmen that Claudius, we are told, was governed. The facility of enfranchisement has been already mentioned. We have seen how the slaves of a noble household were of two very different classes; of which the lower consisted of mere menial drudges, the rude boors of Thrace, Africa, or Cappadocia; while the upper, principally from Greece and Syria, comprised the polished instruments of fastidious luxury, exquisitely trained and educated, and accustomed, by every compliance, however abject, to ingratiate themselves with their sensual and pampered masters. While the former class had little hope perhaps of improving their condition, or escaping, if not prematurely worn out by toil, a neglected and even an abandoned old age, the latter might calculate on securing their freedom early, after which they enjoyed a thousand opportunities of rendering themselves as necessary to their patron as they had previously been to their master. The intercourse of the Roman noble with his fellow-citizens had been always stiff and ceremonious: the

<sup>1</sup> It was Valerius Messala, or Messalinus, the father of the empress, who had resisted, in the time of Tiberius, the proposition that the wives of provincial governors should be forbidden to accompany their husbands abroad. He had used the proud old Roman argument: "Viri in eo culpam si femina modum excedat." This man and Aurelius Cotta Messalinus seem to have both been sons of Messala Corvinus. See Ruperti on Tacitus, *Ann.* ii. 32.

many privileges they had in common gave even the plebeian a claim to formal respect from his patrician neighbour; and it was rarely that the ties of confidence and easy friendship subsisted between men so nearly equal in consideration, so often rivals, and always liable to become so. But the Roman magnate wearied of the unceasing round of conventionalities in which he moved, and longed for associates with whom he might unbend in real familiarity, without demeaning himself to the company of mere slaves. The fashion of employing freedmen for the service of the patrician household, and the management of domestic affairs, was first imported into Rome by the conquerors of the East, by Sulla, Lucullus, and Pompeius;—who were too proud, after enjoying the submission of kings and potentates, to recognise the equality of their fellow-citizens. Cæsar indeed, with his usual magnanimity, had disdained to avail himself of this unworthy indulgence. The ascendancy he naturally exercised over all that came in contact with him, enabled him to secure the spontaneous services of men of birth and consideration hardly inferior to his own, such as Matius, Oppius, and Hirtius. Such were the stewards of his revenues, the managers of his public and private benevolences, Romans in birth and blood, men attached to him by real friendship, but who felt that they could ply without disgrace before his acknowledged superiority. But even the inheritor of a throne had no such personal influence as nature's emperor, the first of the Cæsars. Augustus, great as he was in genius as well as in station, scarcely found such willing subservience among the citizens of his native country. Agrippa became too powerful to continue really his friend; the self-respect even of Mæcenas grew at last irksome to him. He had recourse to the venal attachment of his freedmen, whose fidelity exacted no requital, and hardly expected an acknowledgment; and of these he held many in intimacy, and cultivated their esteem. The names of Polybius and Hilarion, of Licinus, Eunus, and Celadus, occur in history or inscriptions

among the trusty freedmen of the first princeps.<sup>1</sup> He neither required of them degrading services, nor again did he suffer them to gorge themselves with the spoils of his suitors. He enjoyed the solace of their intimacy, and when most anxious for privacy, and the ever-coveted respite from the formalities of patrician life, it was in the suburban villa of one of these humble ministers that he would disburden himself of the cares of his station.\* Tiberius, whose strict self-discipline, at least till the latter years of his retirement, was even more severe and unremitting, allowed himself no such relaxation; his freedmen were few in number, and seem to have enjoyed no portion of his confidence. The perturbed spirit of Caius was agitated by restless furies which never suffered him to seek repose, or court the charms of simplicity for a moment. During the fitful fever of his brief grasp of power he never threw off the public man and the sovereign; he never sought the shade, or cast upon another the cares and toils of his awful pre-eminence. None ever possessed more than a momentary influence over him. But the fashion of keeping freedmen always in attendance on the Roman noble had become, from the prevailing indolence of the age, by this time general, and Caius had many such about his court, though he deigned to make little use of them. When, therefore, a prince succeeded to whom ministers and confidants were a necessity, the institution was ready to his hands. The various services, partly official, partly menial, which monarchs in modern times have been allowed by the spirit of feudalism to exact from their noble vassals, were discharged for Claudius by these Grecian adventurers. Polybius was the director of his studies, who unrolled for him perhaps the dusty volumes of Etruscan lore, in which he pretended to instruct his countrymen. Narcissus was his secretary; Pallas was his steward. To Felix, the brother of Pallas, he gave the command of a province and an army. The eunuch Posides, whatever his special functions may have been, was

<sup>1</sup> *Suet. Oct.* 67, 101. with notes of Baumgarten-Crusius.

\* *Suet. Oct.* 72.

among that class of his intimate attendants which the Roman borrowed from the domestic establishments of the East. Narcissus was the most confidential of his advisers; Harpocras, Myron, Amphæus, Pheronactes, and Drusillanus are mentioned, though with no specified offices, among the friends and favourites, who shared in the cares, or amused the leisure of a patron who lacked the faculty of originating for himself either his employments or his diversions.<sup>1</sup> These were the men who secured the intimacy of the chief of the Roman nobility; they occupied his attention to the exclusion of senators and consulars; they suggested the measures of his administration, engaged favourable audiences for foreign potentates, directed the appointment of proconsuls and legates, controlled the march of armies and the campaigns of emperors: these were the men who determined with Messalina who should be the victims of delation, who were the fittest for sacrifice, who the most pliant for corruption; to these every noble Roman, every wealthy foreigner, paid court by presents and flatteries; upon these Messalina bestowed her own favours, and procured for them within the walls of the palace itself the noblest women of Rome.<sup>2</sup> Most of these men amassed colossal fortunes; the wealth of Pallas and Narcissus became proverbial; and when Claudius was once heard to complain of the slenderness of his own imperial revenues, it was replied that he would be rich enough if his two wealthy freedmen would deign to take him into partnership.<sup>3</sup> Both the one and the other of these favourites were honoured by the senate with the insignia of high magistracies, though it was impossible to admit them to such offices themselves, and they were loaded, moreover,

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 28.; Senec. *Apocol.* 14.; Tertull. *de Pall.* 5.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 24.; Dion, ix. 2, 17, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 28.: "Abundaturum si a duobus libertis in consortium ciperetur." Of Narcissus Dion says (ix. 34.), *μυριάδας πλείους μυρίων εἶχε, καὶ προσεῖχον αὐτῷ πόλεις καὶ βασιλεῖς.* Of Pallas Tacitus (*Ann.* xii. 53.): "Pallanti centies quadragies sestertium censuit consul designatus." Juvenal, l. 108.: "Ego possideo plus Pallante et Liciis."



with enormous grants of public money.<sup>1</sup> As long as the good understanding between the empress and the freedmen was maintained by mutual compliances, the emperor remained the infatuated victim of their heinous conspiracy. He continued to be deluded for years with the notion that he was governing Rome with the energy of an ancient consul or dictator, but his operations, contrived and guided by their hands, were little more than the mere shadows of sovereignty: if he made the laws, the administration of them, in which alone the real government consisted, was still subjected to their control, and was exercised from East to West by their creatures. Claudius, under the influence of his wives and children, enacted not their prince but their minister.<sup>2</sup>

Such at least is the conclusion to which the testimony of all our authorities would lead us. Nevertheless, if the evil influences of the Claudian court were so paramount as they are described, it must be deemed strange that its public policy was so well directed, and on the whole so nobly executed, as we have seen it to have been, and that the scandals of the reign of Messalina and the freedmen are confined for the most part to the interior of the palace. It will be seen, as we proceed, that the worst enormities of the government of Claudius refer to affairs on which we are quite unable to speak with certainty; while the merits of his principate, whatever estimate we may form of them, relate precisely to the matters which are most patent to the judgment of history. To return, however, to the narrative before us. Even in the first year of the new reign, while the public conduct of the emperor, both at home and abroad, was earning merited applause, the imperial family was torn with jealousies, and harassed by intrigues. Among the first acts of Claudius

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 38., xii. 53. Pliny (*Epp.* vii. 29., viii. 6.) mentions the *Senatusconsultum*, and the monument erected to Pallas with an inscription.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 29.: "His uxoribusque deditus, non principem sed ministrum egit."

was the recall from banishment of the sisters of Caius: but Messalina, it is said, was jealous of Julia's fascinations, and, irritated at the secret interviews she was reported to enjoy with her uncle, succeeded in driving her once more into exile for her reputed irregularities. Her punishment was shared by the philosopher Seneca, who was alleged to have criminally intrigued with her. He was confined, by a decree of the senate, to the rude and unhealthy island of Corsica.<sup>1</sup> Here he was detained for some years, apparently till the fall of Messalina herself; yet it is at least remarkable, that his voice, which has uttered some of the fiercest denunciations of the crimes and vices of the emperor, should be totally silent on the enormities of the empress. It has already been noticed that Caius had intended to put the great Stoic moralist to death for no other reason than the reputation of his wealth, and at a later period we again read of him as one of the richest men of his time. It would seem, therefore, that on this occasion he was not deprived of his estates; and if Messalina was really the promoter of his exile, the prosecution cannot be imputed to the cupidity so generally ascribed to her. Of the wretched Julia we hear no more but that the malice of her persecutors was not yet satisfied, and that she was not suffered long to survive her second disgrace.<sup>2</sup>

Recall of the sisters of Caius and second banishment of Julia.

Banishment of Seneca.

The year 796 was marked, according to the same authorities, by a crime of still deeper atrocity, ascribed to the same baneful influence. The shamelessness of the empress and the weakness of the man she governed, were frightfully exemplified in the death of Appius

Death of Appius Silanus.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lx. 8.; Senec. *Consol. ad Polyb.* 30, 32. Claudius, says Seneca, "me defecit quidem, sed impulsus a fortuna et cadentem sustinuit, et in præceps euntem leniter divinæ manus usus moderatione deposuit." An enemy of Seneca denounces him at a later period as "domus Germanici adulterum." Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 29.; Dion. lx. 8, 18.

Silanus.<sup>1</sup> This nobleman, the head at this period of the great Junian house, was connected with the *Æmilii*, the *Cassii*, and with the *Cæsars* themselves: Claudius proposed to draw still closer the bonds of alliance between their families, and strengthen thereby the bulwarks of his own imperial throne.<sup>2</sup> With this view he recalled him from the command of a province in Spain, united him in marriage with the mother of the empress, and affianced his son to his own daughter Octavia, then a tender infant. But, from whatever cause, Messalina, it seems, conceived an implacable enmity against him: it was surmised that she had cast on him amorous glances which he had not deigned to return; at all events, she resolved on his destruction, and concerted with Narcissus an extraordinary plan for its accomplishment. Early one morning the favourite, for Narcissus at this moment stood foremost in his patron's graces, burst suddenly into his apartment, with affected alarm, and related that he had dreamt that night that the emperor had been murdered by Silanus. Messalina, the partner of the imperial chamber, thereupon declared that, strange to relate, the very same vision had occurred also to herself. Claudius was horrified and bewildered. At the next moment Silanus presented himself, according to a previous appointment; but in his consternation the appointment had slipped altogether from the emperor's memory, and he beheld in his unseasonable intrusion a proof of his meditated crime. The confederates seized their advantage: they hastily extorted from their dupe an order for their victim's arrest and immediate execution; and the next day Claudius recounted the occurrence to the senate, and

<sup>1</sup> Dion (lx. 14.) calls him erroneously Caius Appius Silanus: his prænomen was Appius, and his nomen Junius.

<sup>2</sup> Appius Silanus was married first to *Æmilia Lepida*, the great granddaughter of Augustus, through the two Julias. By her he had two sons, Marcus and Lucius, and a daughter Junia Calpurnia. Lepidus the triumvir and Cassius the tribune were among the connexions of this family. Caius Caligula had married Claudia or Claudilla, daughter of a M. Silanus, consul in 772. See the Genealogical Tables at the end of this chapter.

publicly thanked the faithful servant who, even in his sleep, had watched over his patron's safety.<sup>1</sup> In this or similar ways, we are assured, died many others also, who seemed to stand in the way of Messalina and her confederate. Whenever they wanted to rid themselves of an enemy, nothing was easier than to excite the dotard's apprehensions and procure a sentence of death, disgrace, or banishment. In his moments of terror he was ready to subscribe his name to any order of cruelty or injustice: as soon as the paroxysm had subsided, he would forget all that had passed, and was known to inquire sometimes the next day for the persons he had so recently consigned to the executioner, and to wonder at their absence from his table. When reminded of the cause of their non-appearance, he was visibly surprised and mortified.<sup>2</sup> It seems probable that this imputation of extraordinary weakness and obliviousness is merely a perversion of some actual instances of absence of mind, not unpardonable, perhaps, in one so painfully occupied with cares and manifold occupations; but we have seen enough of the earnestness and general good sense of Claudius to question the truth of charges which would ascribe to him, while yet in the full activity of his faculties, whatever they may have been, the infatuation of second childishness.

Meanwhile the spirit of resistance to the imperial tyranny which had so long slumbered in the breasts of a trampled aristocracy, but had at last awakened under the insane despotism of Caius, continued to pervade the ranks of the senate and knights. The blow struck by Chærea had been, as we have seen, almost accidental; it was unconnected, at least, with any general conspiracy; and the sudden resolve of the prætorians found the chiefs of the state unprepared and vacillating. But since the opportunity for acting had passed away, many plans of action had been discussed and concerted. The ease with

*Conspiracy of  
Vinicianus and  
Scribonianus.*

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 37.; Dion, l. c. Tacitus alludes to this murder. *Ann.* xi. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 39.; Dion, l. c.

which the tyrant had been overthrown astonished the men who had so long shrunk from the attempt. The obtrusion of a weak, but not the less dangerous despot upon them, though at first sullenly acquiesced in, was all the more deeply resented. A common sympathy drew together many of the nobles to overthrow the existing government and replace it by a better system, or at least by a better man. Their eyes were cast upon Annius Vinicianus, as apparently the fittest of their class to reconstruct the authority of the senate. But the fruitless act of the gallant tribune had warned them that it was not enough merely to strike down the occupant of the throne; it was necessary to secure the support of a legionary force, strong enough to control the prætorians, and protect the cradle of new-born liberty. Of the special claims of Vinicianus to the post assigned him we have no account; from his name we may conjecture that he was a Vinicius, allied to the reigning family, and adopted into the ancient house of the Annii. Among the conspirators was Furius Camillus Scribonianus, proconsul of Dalmatia; and this man, endeared perhaps to the troops he commanded by the late successes of a Camillus in Africa, if not by the recollection of his ancestor's exploits against the Gauls, offered to bring a military force to support the contemplated movement. Intoxicated with the confidence of success, he hurled defiance at the emperor from his camp beyond the Adriatic, and summoned him scornfully to descend from his throne and hide his head in obscurity. Claudius, we are assured, was smitten with consternation. He took the warning of the rebel legate into serious consideration, and actually debated with his courtiers on the necessity of submission.<sup>1</sup> But the vaunts of Camillus, as it soon appeared, were empty and ineffectual. When he disclosed his intentions to the soldiers, and invited them to follow him into Italy, in the name of the ancient republic, he found them altogether indifferent, or rather hostile to a cry they scarcely comprehended. When they turned

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 13, 85.; Dion, lx. 15. Tacitus alludes to the event, which he had narrated in one of his lost books, in *Ann.* xii. 52.

their swords against him he had no resource but in speedy flight to an island off the coast; and even there he seems to have been speedily surprised and killed by one of his angry officers.<sup>1</sup> The legions which had behaved with such unexpected fidelity were loaded with caresses by the emperor. The Seventh and Eleventh received from the senate the appellations of Claudian, Pious, and Faithful. The discovery of the plot was followed by a bloody proscription. The guiltiest or the most conspicuous, and among them Vinicianus himself, were subjected to judicial sentence; others escaped condemnation by suicide. Claudius in his terror forgot his regulations regarding the testimony of slaves, and invited denunciations without scruple from every quarter: yet it is recorded that he generally spared the families of the culprits, and remitted in their favour the confiscation of the forfeited estates. Among the sufferers was one only of the rank of prætor; and he was required to abdicate his office, before the emperor would subject him to the punishment of the sword. Narcissus and Polybius, supported by Messalina, bore the principal odium of this inquisition; those who suffered, and those who escaped, were supposed to owe their fortune respectively to the demands advanced by court-favourites for their condemnation or acquittal, and these, in either case, sought only their personal emolument. The famous and affecting story of Arria and Pætus is connected with this proscription, and may serve to impress it on our recollection.<sup>2</sup>

The discovery of this formidable combination against his life and power might easily render the shy and suspicious emperor a mere puppet henceforth in the hands of his advisers.<sup>3</sup> Then commenced, we might suppose, in earnest the

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus (*Hist.* ii. 75.) mentions this deed, the name of the soldier, and the fact of his receiving high promotion in consequence. It is curious that a circumstance, apparently so notorious, should have been unknown to Dion, who says that Camillus threw himself on his own sword.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. Dion, ii. cc. The story of Arria and Pætus is told at length by the younger Pliny, *Epist.* iii. 16. Comp. Martial, i. 14.

<sup>3</sup> There is an obscure reference to a second attempt against Claudius by

Strange inconsistency in the accounts of the conduct of Claudius.

reign of Messalina and the freedmen: thenceforth the pretended ruler of the state might be expected to withdraw more and more from public observation, and every affair of government to be transacted by the agency of his confidential instruments. The man who had deliberated on retiring from power at the first challenge of an audacious rival, who again, after the suppression of the revolt, essayed, as we are assured, to abdicate, but was prevented by influence behind the throne, could scarcely recover courage to wield the sceptre of the world from the height of the Palatium.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, we may picture to ourselves the corruption which would now pervade every department of public affairs, subject as they were to the control of a degraded and venal crew, and veiled by their contrivance from the scrutiny of the nominal ruler. We may imagine the wiles of the depraved and wanton Messalina; how she steeped the senses of her consort in brutal indulgences; how she pandered to his grossest appetites, while she gratified her own amorous caprices or satiated her cupidity unobserved. All this, indeed, and more, stands recorded on the page of what is designated as the history of Rome; and it is only here and there that a corner of the veil is raised, and we are permitted to see the unfortunate Claudius still acting as emperor of the Romans, still presiding on the tribunals, still listening with patience, if not with favour, to the pertinacious attacks on his own powerful freedmen, which the most eloquent pleader of the day did not hesitate to launch against them,<sup>2</sup> still assisting at the delib-

Asinius Gallus, son of the Gallus whom Tiberius had put to death, and Statilius Corvinus, the one the grandson of Pollio, the other of Messala, in Suetonius, *Claud.* 13. and Dion, lx. 27. The conspiracy was abortive, and its authors seem to have been treated with contemptuous lenity. Of Gallus Dion says, *συμκρότατος καὶ ἀσειδέστατος ὢν, καὶ τοῦτον καταφρονεῖς, γέλωτα μᾶλλον ἢ κίνδυνον ὥρην.*

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 36.

<sup>2</sup> Quintil. *Inst. Orat.* vi. 8, 81.: "Afer cum ageret contra libertum Claudii Caesaris, et ex diverso quidam conditionis ejusdem, cujus erat litigator, emolmasset, Præterea tu semper in libertos Caesaris dicis: Nec mehercule, inquit

erations of the senate, still controlling the affairs of provinces and nations, devising schemes and settling the details of colonization, thirsting for military toils in addition to his intense application to business at home, and, coward as we are assured he was, actually quitting Rome, the focus of hostile intrigue, and throwing himself, like another Augustus, into the wildest fastnesses of barbarian enemies. Such are the strange inconsistencies of the history before us, which it only remains for us to set over against one another, but which we cannot pretend to reconcile or explain.

Accordingly, the year 796, the next which followed on the abortive attempt of the malecontents, witnessed the progress of Claudius with military pomp from Ostia into the heart of Britain, an expedition the particulars of which may be reserved for another chapter. Claudius was absent from the city six months. On his return he was greeted by the senate with a decree for a triumph, an honour not unmerited by his success.<sup>1</sup> He assumed in token of his exploits the title of Britannicus, an appellation which was communicated, moreover, to his infant son, and which has superseded in history the name of Tiberius Claudius Germanicus, by which the child had been originally designated. The triumph of Claudius was rendered remarkable by his voluntary selfabasement in climbing the steps of the Capitoline temple on his knees, an act performed, perhaps, in imitation of Julius Cæsar.<sup>2</sup> It was followed by

Campaign and  
triumph of  
Claudius.

quidquam proficio." This was the same Domitius Afer who had aided Sejanus in persecuting the family of Germanicus, and who had pretended to be overcome by the eloquence of Caius. Pliny and Quintilian speak of him as the greatest orator of his time, and we have seen that he was one of the supplest of courtiers. Yet he stood up against the freedmen of Claudius, and survived most of them, dying at last in prosperity and honour in the sixth year of Nero. Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 19.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 17.; Tac. *Agric.* 13.; Dion. lx. 19. foll.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 16. On his return Claudius seems to have abandoned the Æmilian Way, and embarked on the canal by which Augustus connected the Po with the Adriatic at Ravenna. Plin. *H. N.* iii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lx. 20. See above, chapter xix.



solemn games, and was made the occasion of bestowing many gracious distinctions, both civil and military, on the most deserving officers of the state. If Claudius was proud of appearing to rival Augustus, not less did he pique himself on comparing his beloved Messalina to the chaste and noble Livia. To her accordingly, as to the consort of the first princeps before her, were decreed at his instance a seat of honour by her husband's side on all public occasions, and the permission to ride in the *carpentum*, which had formerly been forbidden to the sex by the law of Oppius, and was still generally confined to sacerdotal personages at the greatest solemnities.<sup>1</sup> So unworthy, however, was the chief of the Roman matrons of these honourable distinctions, that when the brass coinage of Caius was called in by the decree of the senate, she obtained the metal to cast of it statues of a dancer named Mnester, with whom she was furiously smitten.<sup>2</sup> Like so many others of the men on whom she fixed her admiration, Mnester, if we may believe the historians, was moved neither by caresses nor menaces to gratify her, and was at last only driven into her embraces by the express command of the emperor himself, to whom she had ventured shamelessly to apply for it. In this and many other cases, we are told, Messalina solicited a like indulgence from her fond and facile spouse, and he without hesitation complied.<sup>3</sup> At other times, when she wandered from the imperial couch in quest of the coarsest gratifications, she would cause one of her handmaids

<sup>1</sup> Dion, l. c.; Suet. *Claud.* 17. Comp. *Calig.* 15. He had previously made an exception in favour of his mother Antonia. Of the use of the *carpentum* Tacitus says (*Ann.* xii. 42.), "Qui mos sacerdotibus et sacris antiquitus concessum."

<sup>2</sup> The senate, according to Dion, caused the brass coinage which bore the head of Caius to be melted down from disgust at the tyrant's memory. Dion, l. c.: καὶ ἐπράχθη μὲν τοῦτο, οὐ μέντοι καὶ ἐς τὸ βέλτιον ἰχάλκος ἐχώρησεν, ἀλλ' ἀνδρίαντας, κ. τ. λ. I have already shown that there is reason to surmise that this coinage was debased, and am disposed to doubt the whole of Dion's story concerning it.

<sup>3</sup> Dion, l. c.: τὸ δ' αἰτὸ τοῦτο καὶ πρὸς ἄλλους συχνοὺς ἐπράττειν

to take her place by the side of the besotted slumberer.<sup>1</sup> It seems necessary to say thus much upon the subject, disgusting as our authorities have represented it, in order to show how grossly improbable are the details of Messalina's licentiousness, and to guard the reader against too easy a belief in some astounding incidents which have yet to be related.

We seem, indeed, in perusing the narrative before us, to be weltering in a dream of horrors, which, nevertheless, exert over us a kind of fascination, and however we may pause at intervals to question the phantasms they present to us, forbid us to shake off our constrained assent to their reality. The destruction of Julia, which had followed shortly after her second banishment, was succeeded at no long interval by the death of her husband Vinicius. Messalina, says the historian, was apprehensive of his vengeance: Messalina, adds the historian in the same sentence, was incensed at his repudiation of her licentious advances. If such different statements are not in themselves absolutely incompatible, it will be admitted at least that they are open to suspicion; and when we find that the overthrow of Vinicius was effected by no overt act, no public charge and judicial sentence, but was popularly ascribed to the occult agency of poison administered by the contrivance of the empress, a cloud of distrust must be allowed to rest on the whole story.<sup>2</sup> Hitherto we have been left to the inferior authority of Dion or Suetonius; but now, at last, we seem to recover the guidance of a firmer hand, and the next act of Messalina's wickedness is described in the pages of Tacitus. The great chasm in this writer's annals extends from the death of Tiberius, at the end of his sixth,

Messalina's  
progress in  
wickedness.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lx. 18. compared with the well-known passage in the sixth satire of Juvenal. Aurelius Victor and the elder Pliny repeat also some scandalous stories which bear on their faces strong marks of a prurient invention. It will appear from her mother's age, which will be noticed by and by, that Messalina must have been married from the nursery. She can hardly have been more than eighteen at this time.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lx. 27.

to the seventh year of Claudius, in the middle of his eleventh book.<sup>1</sup> In this year, the 800th of the city, Valerius Asiaticus, whose high position among the nobles of Rome has already been mentioned, was one of the consuls. The connexion imputed to him with a woman named Poppæa is said to have given offence to Messalina, who coveted, moreover, the gardens of Lucullus on the Pincian hill, which he had inherited, and which he was adorning with more magnificence than ever. She induced a delator named Suilius to assail the pair with a charge of adultery, and caused Sosibius, the tutor of her child Britannicus, to suggest to the emperor at the same time how dangerous were the wealth and influence of such a man, one who was supposed to have been a chief instigator of the murder of Caius, who had extolled the act and claimed glory for it in public, whose high consideration extended from the city to the provinces, and who, it was reported, was about to betake himself to Gaul, of which he was a native, and where he had great connexions, and place himself at the head of the Germanic legions. The army was already becoming an object of jealousy to the emperor. Claudius was in a moment alarmed at the prospect of rebellion and civil war. He immediately summoned his guards, and sent Crispinus, the prefect of the prætorians, with a detachment to Baïæ, where Asiaticus was seized in his villa, thrown into chains, and hurried to the city. The consul was not allowed to defend himself before the senate: the trial, if such it may be called, was conducted in the private apartments of the emperor, in the presence of his creatures and freedmen. Charges of licentiousness and of treasonable practices were strangely mixed up together, and advanced against him by Suilius and Messalina herself; but these he treated with lofty disregard, till the imputation of disgraceful effeminacy roused the spirit of the Roman noble within him. His energetic and passionate defence had great effect upon Claudius, and even drew

Destruction of  
Valerius Asiaticus.

tears of sensibility from the empress, who slipped out of the room to conceal her emotion, whispering only to a confederate, as she passed, that the criminal, nevertheless, must not be suffered to escape.<sup>1</sup> Asiaticus was remanded, but Poppæa, in the meanwhile, under the terror of impending condemnation, was induced to put an end to her own life. The catastrophe was concealed from Claudius, who invited her husband some days afterwards to his table, and wondered why he had come without his wife. *I have just lost her*, he quietly replied, and sat down to supper.<sup>2</sup>

Among the prosecutors of the unfortunate Asiaticus was L. Vitellius, one of the most notorious of the class of court flatterers, in which he was the more infamous from his high birth and station. Under Tiberius Egregious flatteries of L. Vitellius. he had governed Syria, and had done good service to the state and its ruler in requiring the king of Parthia to pay homage to the emperor's portrait on the legionary standards.<sup>3</sup> He was the first of the citizens who actually adored Caius as a god. On his return from his province he entered the august presence with his head covered, with measured steps and downcast eyes, as a worshipper, and finally prostrated himself at the feet of the divinity. When Caius, in his maddest mood, asked him if he had never seen him in the embrace of Luna, he adroitly replied that the Gods alone had the privilege of beholding one another.<sup>4</sup> From this time Vitellius reigned at Rome as the prince of flatterers. After the death of his first patron he attached himself not less sedulously to Claudius and his favourites.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Ad quod functam fatio responderit." The husband of Poppæa was a Scipio.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. Vitell. 1. 2.; Calig. 14.; Dion, lix. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Dion, l. α.: Βετέλλιος μὲν οὖν, ἐκείθεν ἀρξάμενος, πάντας καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο τοὺς ἄλλους κολακείᾳ ὑπερβάλετο. When Claudius was performing the ceremonies of the hundredth year, Vitellius addressed him with the words "Sæpe facias," a customary greeting on occasions of ordinary sacrifice, but involving a magnificent hyperbole in the case of a Secular rite.

He sought and obtained the honour of taking off Messalina's sandals, one of which he would carry in his bosom and frequently take out and kiss with fervour. He placed golden statues of Narcissus and Pallas among the images of his own family. Envied for his success in this career of ignominy, he became the object of many scandalous imputations, and the high-minded Asiaticus complained that he should owe his ruin to the arts of so shameless a libertine. Vitellius himself pretended to lament the fall of his ancient friend; he enumerated the services of Asiaticus and his family, and when Claudius actually deliberated on acquitting him, made a merit of demanding for him the favour of being allowed to choose his mode of death. Claudius, ever swayed by the last speaker, graciously consented, and with this proviso the sentence was recorded against him. Asiaticus declined the counsel of his friends to starve himself, a course which might leave an interval for the chance of pardon; and after the lofty fashion of the ancient Romans, bathed, perfumed, and supped magnificently, and then opened his veins and let himself bleed to death. Before dying he inspected the pyre prepared for him in his own gardens, and ordered it to be removed to another spot, that an umbrageous plantation which overhung it might not be injured by the flames.<sup>1</sup>

The success of this accusation seems to have incited Suilius to further delations, and the success of Suilius stimulated the cupidity of many other delators. The fondness of Claudius himself for judicial procedure made this in fact a delicate mode of flattery. He was proud to find his own vigilance in maintaining justice responded to by zeal and activity in the accusers, and he

Diligence of  
Claudius in ad-  
ministering the  
laws.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 3.: "Tantum illi securitatis novissimæ fuit. Such is the generous patrician's sense of the glories of his family estate which "Mancipio nulli datur, omnibus usu." The suburban plantations of the Roman nobility might be now of three hundred years' growth. Propertius may describe to us how

"Nemus omne satas intendat vertice sylvas,  
Urgetur quantis Caucasus aboribus." l. 14. 5.

plumed himself on not disappointing them in the promptness of his convictions, and the severity of his sentences. However well-meaning Claudius may have been, however much he may have confided in his own conscientiousness, it is but too apparent that, amidst the glitter of false rhetoric, and the noisy display of false sentiment around him, he had not the strength of will or understanding to struggle for the truth, or aim steadily at the right. If the imperial judge was laborious, it may be believed that he was not unfrequently capricious and fitful. The cause which had dragged painfully through a long morning sitting may have been interrupted occasionally by an intemperate carousal, and only resumed with feelings of weariness and disgust. After all the plodding industry he manifested, he was accused, not perhaps without foundation, of giving sentence often with only one side heard, sometimes with neither.<sup>1</sup> With a master so vain and so unstable, surrounded by a crew of greedy parasites all playing on his weaknesses, the last hope of the class over whom these accusations were always impending was to mitigate, if possible, the zeal of the accusers by diminishing their temptations. An ancient law of the republic had forbidden the noble advocate to accept fee or reward for the exercise of his eloquence at the bar of justice; yet for many generations this dignified piece of legislation

<sup>1</sup> Senec. *Apocol.* 11.:

“Quo non alius

Potuit citius discere causas:

Una tantum parte audita,

Sepe et neutra.”

The satirist is confirmed, or copied, by Suetonius in saying that Claudius put to death in the course of his reign thirty senators and above three hundred knights. The numbers may readily be suspected. We may remember the three hundred whom, according to one account, Cæsar slew after Thapsus, the three hundred killed by Antonius at Brundisium, the three hundred sacrificed by Octavius at Perusia. The slaughters ascribed to Claudius were not massacres, but judicial executions, and these rarely, perhaps, for crimes against himself. His stolid nature knew no mercy, and he consigned to death without remorse every victim of a sanguinary code and of a harsh and barbarous procedure.

had been treated as a dead letter. Hortensius and Cicero, and many able pleaders, before and since, had erected fortunes on the grateful acknowledgments of their clients; and the penalty which Augustus had sanctioned for a violation of this law had probably been rarely enforced.<sup>1</sup> The assignment by Tiberius to the delators of a share in the spoils of their victims was an infringement of the spirit of this regulation: but the defence of the imperial majesty was supposed to override every other consideration. Now at last, after a long interval, the nobles who had failed to overthrow the new tyranny by arms, sought to repress it by an appeal to the law of Cincius, and demanded in fact of Claudius the abolition of what his predecessors had deemed their surest safeguard. Claudius, with that strict submission to the letter of the law which seems to have been more strongly marked in him than the sense of equity or of right reason, allowed the matter to be brought into public discussion. C. Silius, a consul designate, ventured to advocate the return to the ancient principles, while the ordinary practice had an unpopular defender in the delator Suilius. Nevertheless, the senate could not shut its eyes to the injustice and impolicy of forbidding all remuneration to oratorical talent, and contented itself with restricting it to the sum of 10,000 sesterces, about eighty pounds sterling, for the advocacy of any single cause; a limitation which, had it been actually enforced, as we cannot suppose was the case, must have greatly discouraged the profession, the high consideration of which has generally been found the strongest bulwark against the authority of unscrupulous governments. It was not by such methods that the vice of delation was to be checked; nor do we find that this abortive recurrence to the principles of a simpler state of society had the slightest effect in controlling it. As far, however, as we can understand the circumstances, the conduct of Claudius seems to do him much honour.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dion, liv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 5-7. On the "lex Cincia," see Cic. *de Orat.* ii. 71., and

The subjugation of Southern Britain was celebrated in the year 800 by the ovation of Aulus Plautius, the same able and successful officer who had prepared the way for the triumph of the emperor three years before. The honour of the greater triumph could not be conferred on a lieutenant; but Claudius showed no unworthy jealousy of his exploits, the most glorious, perhaps, of any since the time of Cæsar; and after investing him with the triumphal ornaments, the laurelled crown and robe, actually walked on his left hand, while Plautius rode himself on horseback through the streets to the Capitol.<sup>1</sup> This was unquestionably the greatest honour imperial Rome ever bestowed on a subject; but the modesty of Plautius was equal to his merit, and he continued to enjoy the favour of his masters by giving their jealousy no umbrage. The city had now completed eight centuries of fame and fortune, according to popular computation, and though only sixty-three years had elapsed since Augustus, following the pontifical traditions, had been called on to celebrate secular games, Claudius, in his turn, was easily persuaded that the auspicious era deserved to be commemorated by a similar solemnity. Among other festivities, the *Game of Troy* was rehearsed by noble youths, and Britannicus, then in his seventh year, was introduced to the people, as a participator in the ceremony, or at least a witness of it. But another child, the son of the emperor's niece Agrippina, by her deceased husband Domitius, made a more conspicuous figure. The age of

Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 42., xv. 20.; Plin. *Ep.* v. 21. The "lex Cincia" seems to have embraced two particulars: 1. the prohibition of fees for advocacy; and, 2. certain restrictions upon gifts in general. With the second of these we are not here concerned: as regards the first, it is difficult to suppose there was not some distinction made between fees paid by a client for his defence, and rewards assigned by the state for the prosecution of a criminal: the latter may naturally have become a matter of jealousy to the class who found themselves so often placed as criminals at the bar; but to the other no reasonable objection could be advanced. I do not find, however, any such distinction referred to in the few passages which relate to this law.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 24.; Dion, lx. 30.



Lucius Domitius exceeded his cousin's by three years: he was beautiful in person, and he was the grandson of the still-lamented Germanicus, and on all these accounts, it was to him that the Romans looked with present favour, and of him that they formed the fairest auguries.<sup>1</sup> The appearance of the two children on that day, and the different reception they encountered, might be taken by a thoughtful spectator as a presage of the fate that was reserved for them, of the premature death of the one, and the guilty glories of the other.

Our history, at least in its earliest stages, has presented a succession of antagonisms between the lords of human kind, the mortal duels of a Sulla and Marius, a Cæsar and Pompeius, an Octavius and Antonius: but these deadly feuds have been confined to the harder and coarser sex; the rivalry of Cleopatra and Octavia was a contest of beauty and fascination, expressed only by lofty scorn on the one side, and by sly depreciation on the other. But we have now before us a contest of another stamp. The shows of the arena at this period were sometimes disgraced by the combats of armed Amazons; but the court of Claudius was the first to present the hideous spectacle of two women, of the highest birth and rank, and closely connected by ties of blood and marriage, engaged in a desperate encounter of intrigue and perfidy, ending in the violent overthrow of the one and the rise of the other, but equally in the eternal infamy of both. Considering how little regard was generally paid to women in private, and still less in public life at Rome, nothing seems to me to mark so much the feebleness of Claudius, as the licence thus assumed by two rival princesses to convulse the world with a quarrel of the boudoir, and the power they had to stamp a character on the history of their times.

Messalina had in vain procured the banishment of Julia, while her sister Agrippina, certainly not inferior in beauty,

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 11. It seems most probable, amidst the conflicting accounts, that Britannicus was born early in 794, and Nero in 790, December 15 Suet. *Ner.* 6. Comp. Tac. *Ann.* xii. 25.

energy, and unprincipled ambition, was suffered to remain in Rome. The emperor's niece continued to occupy a place next to the empress herself in the imperial household, to divide with her the attentions of the courtiers, and even to exert her blandishments, not without effect, on the unwary good nature of her uncle. We may imagine the jealousy of the reigning favourite; the anxiety with which she would watch every movement of an aspirant whom she had injured and menaced, and from whom she had no mercy to expect, of a woman leagued with her enemies and intriguing with her friends; her fears for the affections of her husband, for the fidelity of his freedmen, for the precarious prospects of her son. Watched in turn by an able and unsparing foe, with full access to the ear of Claudius, and ever ready to abuse it, the stay of the wretched she had oppressed, the hope of the ambitious she had repelled, Messalina must have been indeed the weakest of her sex, if she really paraded the utter disregard of decorum as well as duty, which has been ascribed to her. It seems incredible that the husband should be suffered to remain ignorant of wrongs which could so easily be divulged to him, were they so gross and notorious as after her death they were declared to have always been. While Messalina lived and reigned, it might be more dangerous to slander her; but we must observe that Agrippina became both the victor and survivor in the strife between them. Who can doubt that it was then her aim to disgust the mind of Claudius with the woman he had once admired, to disgust both him and the citizens with the child she pretended to have borne him, and thus prepare the way by unscrupulous detraction for the elevation of her own son above Britannicus? By constituting herself the narrator of the contest she made history tell the tale as she wished it to be told. She had succeeded in representing Messalina to posterity in the same hideous colours in which she had before represented her to her contemporaries. Historians, wearied with the vain task of seeking for truth in documents of state

Mutual hatred  
of Messalina  
and Agrippina.

and imperial manifestos, turned eagerly to revelations of the palace vouchsafed by an inmate of its recesses, an actress in its most private scenes; and the memoirs of Agrippina were no doubt accepted as an authority on transactions which she was most concerned in tricking with the falsest colours. An anecdotist such as Suetonius, or a professioned satirist like Juvenal, would readily embrace the piquant calumnies of a triumphant intriguer: that even Tacitus yielded to the same attractions, may be fairly assumed from his referring to these very memoirs as authentic documents on another, nor a less delicate subject.<sup>1</sup> We have no choice, however, but to read the story in the light in which these brilliant declaimers have placed it, only bearing in mind the foul source from which it has, in all probability, descended to us, and remarking such tokens of its distortion from the truth as an attentive perusal cannot fail to suggest to us.

Nor must we overlook the circumstance that others besides Agrippina were interested in overthrowing the object of their fear, no less than of her detestation. The confederacy which had so long subsisted between the empress and the freedmen might be dissolved by mutual jealousies and intrigues. Polybius, who had reigned supreme in the imperial household, was the friend of Seneca, and as such it seems probable that he became attached to the party of Agrippina. Messalina procured at last his disgrace; and this was doubtless the last triumph she obtained over the rising influence of her rival. The triumph cost her dear. It alarmed and alienated from her the other minions of the palace. When they found that the guilty commerce they had so long maintained with her had ceased to secure their own lives and fortunes, they might easily be persuaded to transfer their power to the opposite

The freedmen  
conspire with  
Agrippina.

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, whose appetite for information was on most subjects indiscriminate, consulted the memoirs of Agrippina as veritable history. See his preface and *Hist. Nat.* vii. 6. 8.; and comp. Tac. *Ann.* iv. 54. Nor is there any difficulty in believing that a story once accredited became repeated with even additional colouring by succeeding writers.

side. They aided, as we shall see, in the overthrow of Messalina: it may readily be believed that they effected their success by fraud, and defended it by unscrupulous falsehood.

Messalina's enmity towards Agrippina and Domitius was redoubled, we are told, at perceiving the manifest disposition of the citizens in their favour; and she would have sought means of destroying her rival by suborned accusers, had she not been preoccupied

Amour of Messalina with Silius.

at the moment by a new and strange passion, which seemed akin to fascination. She had fallen in love with Caius Silius before mentioned, who was reputed not only the handsomest, but one of the most virtuous of the nobles.<sup>1</sup> She had insisted on his divorcing his wife, in order to obtain entire possession of him. Silius was either unconscious at first how deadly her caresses were, or possibly he conceived that to reject her advances would be certain destruction, while in admitting them there might be chances, at least, of escape. To her caresses she added bribes, and held out the hope of a more splendid destiny, till he yielded to her demands, and was amazed to find himself courted without reserve, his house besieged by her repeated visits, all his movements watched and followed. Brilliant presents were thrust upon him, the highest public office laid at his feet, and finally the slaves, the freedmen, and all the glittering retinue which attended the emperor himself, were arrayed before his door, as if the fortunes of the principate had been actually transferred to him.<sup>2</sup>

But Messalina was inconstant; her amour with Silius, however flagrant its guilt, lost somewhat of its charm from

<sup>1</sup> Juvenal, x. 331.:

“Optimus hic et formosissimus idem  
Gentis patriciæ rapitur miser, extinguendus  
Messalinæ oculis.”

This C. Silius is supposed to have been the son of Silius the commander of the Roman forces in Gaul under Tiberius, who was consul A. U. 766, and put an end to his own life, being charged with Majestas, in 777: see above.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. xi. 12.

Precipitation of  
Silius.

A. D. 48.  
A. U. 801.

its very openness and facility, and the object of her capricious passion perceived that she too often strayed from him to new and unknown rivals. He was mortified and alarmed, and ventured to demand the immediate fulfilment of her most glowing promises. Let us wait no longer, he said, on the old man's slow decay: the innocent might be content to bide their time, and amuse themselves with the pleasures of anticipation; but guilty as they were, they must act at once with promptitude and boldness. He urged that he was now single and childless, and prepared to adopt Britannicus: were Claudius once removed, Messalina, he vowed, should retain in his arms all the power and splendour she had enjoyed by the side of the emperor. He would seize the supreme authority, but he would reign in the name of Messalina's son, the last scion of the Cæsarean family. To these instances, however, his paramour was now less eager to listen; not from any lingering regard for her miserable husband, but through fear of raising her lover to a position in which, in his turn, he might prove unfaithful to herself. Nevertheless the prospect of a pretended marriage still inflamed and stimulated her, from the very grandeur of its infamy, which gives the last flavour to crime in the imagination of the most wanton of criminals.<sup>1</sup> *I am well aware*, says

Tacitus affirms  
that Messalina  
and Silius were  
regularly married.

Tacitus, whose steps we have been closely following, *what a fiction and fable it will be deemed, that in a town which knows everything, and keeps no secrets, any human being ever reached such a pitch of audacity, least of all one a consul designate, the other the consort of the sovereign, as to meet on a day appointed, with witnesses to sign and seal, as for a regular and legitimate marriage; that she should listen to the words of the diviners, approach the temples, sacrifice to the Gods, and recline herself at the nuptial board; finally, that she should surrender herself as to the embraces of a husband, and the rites of the*

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xi. 26.: "Nomen tamen matrimonii concupivit, ob magnitudinem infamiae, cujus apud prodigos novissima voluptas est."

*nuptial chamber. But far be it from me to invent or to colour for the marvel's sake: I only relate precisely that which those who have gone before me have themselves heard and committed to writing.*<sup>1</sup>

The historian requires us to believe,—and his account corresponds with those of every other existing authority,—that Messalina was actually married to Silius with the most formal ceremonies, during the <sup>Incredibility of this account.</sup> lifetime of her legitimate husband, and without any act of divorce having passed between them; for the deed, though enacted publicly before all the rest of the world, was done without the husband's knowledge, who was the last to learn the disgrace which had fallen on his house.<sup>2</sup> Such an incident has assuredly no parallel in civilized life: to admit it as a fact, we must suppose at least that the most sacred forms and feelings of society were at the time confounded or abjured, that the Romans of the age of Claudius were living alike without laws and national principles. But for such a supposition there is no ground whatever. There was at this period no such relaxation of conventional restrictions; on the contrary, the reign of Claudius, himself a formalist and a purist, was probably marked by a strong reaction of strictness and austerity on the most delicate points of usage. If the law allowed a woman formally to repudiate her husband, yet such an act could only be done by direct communication with him; whereas Tacitus declares that Messalina demanded the rites of marriage with Silius unknown to Claudius, and therefore while still the legal wife of a living husband.<sup>3</sup> Can we suppose that the culprits, however reckless themselves, would have

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 27.: "Haud sum ignarus fabulosum visum iri . . . sed nihil compositum miraculi causa, verum audita scriptaque senioribus tradam."

<sup>2</sup> Juvenal, l. c.: "Dedecus ille domus sciet ultimus." This is not a mere phrase of rhetoric, but is fully confirmed by the historians.

<sup>3</sup> For the women's license of divorcing their husbands under the later republic and the empire, see Cic. *ad Div.* viii. 7.; Senec. *de Benef.* iii. 16.; Martial, vi. 7.; Juvenal, vi. 224.

found creatures so subservient to their wild behests as to rush on the certain punishment which must have awaited their abetting them? In accepting the common story of this marriage we are driven at least to the notion that Claudius was reputed at the time no better than an idiot, with whom any extravagance might be ventured: yet we have seen ample grounds to think far more favourably both of his understanding and courage. It happens, however, that a word dropped almost, as it would seem, accidentally by Suetonius supplies a clue to the real character of this extraordinary event, and may remove from the story at least its grossest improbability. It is not clear, indeed, whether the writer himself believes the version of the occurrence at which he hints. This circumstance, however, is of little importance to its correctness; for Suetonius, as we have seen, was too fond of a ribald scandal to brook the overthrow of the popular tale of wonder. Claudius, it is suggested, had been assured by the diviners that evil was about to befall the husband of Messalina. From such superstitions few indeed at that time were exempt, and his yielding to them is no argument of peculiar weakness. He conceived the idea of evading his impending fate by marrying his wife to another man. It was rumoured, accordingly, that the nuptials of Silius were actually of the emperor's own contrivance; that he in fact not only recommended and urged them, but, to prevent evasion, sealed himself the documents necessary to their validity.<sup>1</sup> It is not mentioned, indeed, but of this there can be no reasonable doubt, that he had previously divorced his wife in due form, in order to make her new marriage legitimate. Simple and unceremonious as the act of divorcement might be, it was nevertheless of immense significance. The scandalmongers

The marriage possibly instigated by Claudius himself

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 29.: "Nam illud omnem fidem excesserit, quod nuptiis quas Messalina cum adultero Silio fecerat, tabellas dotis et ipso consignaverit, *inductus quasi de industria simularentur*, ad avertendum transferendumque periculum, quod imminere ipsi per quendam ostenta portenderetur." The construction of the sentence is difficult, but its meaning can hardly be doubted.

of the day, the parasites of Claudius, the foes of Messalina, above all, Agrippina herself in her memoirs, may have combined, each for reasons of their own, to heighten the colouring of the story by dropping this essential feature in it; but it seems far more likely that this conspiracy against the truth of history should have succeeded, than that the marriage itself, with its bright array of Auspices and Flamens, of attendants and witnesses, should have been celebrated in defiance of law, religion, and the common feeling of the people, without the sanction of the emperor and husband.

The sequel of the narrative, as told by Tacitus himself, will tend to confirm this view. The emperor's household were struck with consternation, and the freedmen, who wielded his power, trembled, we are assured, at a revolution of the palace so strange and ominous. From the passion which Messalina had conceived for Silius, they had already anticipated danger, even before it reached the height of an audacious defiance. Callistus, Pallas, and Narcissus had all shared in the alarm, and had combined to deter her from the indulgence of an intrigue, more perilous to herself and to them than any of the licentious loves to which she had before abandoned herself. That she should stray to the embraces of a freedman, that an obscure player, such as her favourite Mnester, should *dance himself* into the chamber of the empress, might be a disgrace to the emperor; but the intrusion there of a patrician and a senator, a man of ability as well as consideration, was in fact a defiance to themselves.<sup>1</sup> When, however, it appeared that their opposition would have no other effect than to expose them to her resentment, they desisted from their futile admonitions, and the two first of the associates seem to have resigned themselves to let things take their course. Narcissus, however, whether from personal apprehensions, or urged by Agrippina, determined that the empress should fall.

Combination of  
the freedmen  
against Messa-  
lina.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 28.: "Dum histrio cubiculum principis insultaverit, dedecus quidem inlatum; sed discidium procul abfuisse; nunc juvenem nobilem . . . majorem ad spem accingi."



The marriage with Silius, once effected,—and it mattered little how it had actually been brought about,—might be represented as an insult to the husband, treason against the prince, impiety towards the Gods. Nevertheless, though plainly required to defend himself, the state, and the people with a high hand, the firmness of Claudius could not be depended upon; such was the sluggishness of his feelings, such his devotion to his consort, so many the deeds of blood he had already perpetrated at her demand. Caution and artifice were required in dealing with one so weak, so easily impressible by the first speaker, but not less easily moved by his next successor. As soon as Messalina's daring project was executed, and while, as we are assured, it was yet unknown to Claudius, who was at the time performing sacrifices at Ostia, Narcissus persuaded two women, with whom his master was familiar, to break to him the terrible news. One of these, named Calpurnia, demanded an interview, and throwing herself at his feet announced with loud lamentations the circumstances of his dishonour. The other, a Greek freedwoman, named Cleopatra, who was standing by, thereupon inquired her authority, and she desired, as had been pre-arranged, that Narcissus should be interrogated.<sup>1</sup> Thus brought upon the scene, the favourite humbly confessed his fault in having too long concealed the crimes of his mistress, and her amours with many a noble citizen, with a Titius, a Vettius, and a Plautius; but the present case, he asserted, was more atrocious than any of these, and he could no longer keep silence. *Did Claudius know that he had been divorced by his own wife? that the people, the senate, the soldiers, had all witnessed the marriage of Silius? was he yet unconscious that, unless he acted with vigour, the city was even now in the power of the husband of Messalina?*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of these women Tacitus says with a circumlocution which is meant for delicacy, "Quarum is corporibus maxime insueverat." Yet it is impossible not to suspect that this Calpurnia is the same whom Agrippina afterwards subverted, "Quia formam ejus laudaverat princeps, nulla libidine, sed fortuito sermone." See *Ann.* xii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 29, 30.: "An discidium tuum nosti? nam matrimonium

Claudius, we are assured, was surprised and astounded at this revelation of guilt in one whose fidelity he had never doubted. It was difficult to persuade him of the fact; but it was confirmed again and again by the officers of his household. The plans of Narcissus had been well laid: all conspired to assure the emperor that he was the victim of an abominable crime; that his honour, and still more his power and safety, were fatally compromised. Even on the supposition that he had himself set this marriage on foot with the object which has been suggested, we may still understand how the representations of interested advisers might persuade him to regard it very differently after its accomplishment, and make him feel that his device for evading a distant danger had actually entangled him in another more imminent. But, however this may be, he readily acceded, we are told, to the instances of those about him, urging him to throw himself at once into the camp of the prætorians, and postpone revenge or justice till he had secured his safety. Their object was to prevent an interview between him and his wife. On his way to Rome he was almost overpowered by his alarms. *Am I yet emperor? . . . Is Silius no longer a subject?* were the questions he was continually asking: and so great was his terror, such the apparent prostration of his power of will and purpose, that Vitellius and Lægus, who accompanied him in his carriage, feared to animate a courage which they apprehended would again fail him at the last moment.<sup>1</sup>

Claudius incensed and alarmed.

The scene now changes to the suburban palace of the bridegroom, where Messalina was abandoning herself to voluptuous transports. The season was mid-autumn, the vintage was in full progress; the wine-press was groaning, the ruddy juice was streaming; women girt with scanty fawnskins danced as drunken Bacchantes around her: while she herself, with her hair loose and disor-

Nuptial orgies of Messalina.

*Sili vidit populus et Senatus et miles; ac ni propere agis, tenet Urbem maritus.*"

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 81.: "An ipse imperii potens? an Silius privatus esset?"

dered, brandished the thyrsus in the midst, and Silius by her side, buskined and crowned with ivy, tossed his head to the flaunting strains of Silenus and the Satyrs. Vettius, one, it seems, of the wanton's less fortunate paramours, attended the ceremony, and climbed in merriment a lofty tree in the garden. When asked what he saw, he replied, *An awful storm from Ostia*; and whether there was actually such an appearance, or whether the words were spoken at random, they were accepted afterwards as an omen of the catastrophe which quickly followed.<sup>1</sup>

For now in the midst of these wanton orgies the rumour swiftly spread, and swiftly messengers arrived to confirm it, that Claudius *knew it all*, that Claudius was on his way to Rome, and was coming in anger and for vengeance. The lovers part: Silius for the forum and the tribunals; Messalina for the shade of her gardens on the Pincian, the price of blood of the murdered Asiaticus. The jovial crew was scattered on every side: but meanwhile armed soldiers had surrounded the spot, and all that could be seized were thrown suddenly into chains. Messalina, sobered in a moment by the lightning flash which revealed her danger, had not lost her presence of mind. She resolved to confront the emperor. She summoned her son and daughter to accompany her into their father's presence; at the same time entreated the chief of the Vestals to attend her, and intercede for her with the supreme pontiff. Three only of her women ventured to remain by her side: with these she traversed the length of the city on foot; but her appearance in distress and mourning, on which she had counted for commiseration, attracted no voice or gesture of compassion, and mounting a common cart at the gates she proceeded sadly on the road to Ostia.<sup>2</sup>

Claudius was at the same time advancing, but slowly and timidly; for, amongst his other causes of alarm, he distrust-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Sive ceperat ea species, seu forte lapsa vox in præsagium vertit."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. xi. 82.

ed the loyalty of Lusius Geta, the prefect of his guards, and knew not whether he was about to enter Rome as an emperor or a captive. Narcissus, however, was at hand, and boldly urged that, at such a crisis, the command of the soldiers should be transferred for a single day to one of his trusty freedmen, at the same time offering himself to take it. Claudius consented; Narcissus assumed the command; and while the train moved slowly along, insisted on taking his seat in the emperor's carriage, lest Vitellius and Largus, less resolute than himself, should allow his courage to evaporate. Even to the last indeed Claudius still vacillated. At one moment he exclaimed with fitful vehemence against the abominable crimes of his consort, but again he melted into tears at the recollection of her children; while Vitellius, not knowing how the matter might end, discreetly confined himself to such exclamations as, *How shocking!* and, *Is it possible?* Narcissus could prevail neither on him nor on Largus to reason calmly with their master, and confirm him in the apprehension of his intolerable wrong. Such were the circumstances under which Messalina came in sight, and requested leave to present to him Britannicus and Octavia. Narcissus could only whisper in his ear the odious name of Silius, and remind him of the divorce, the marriage, and the treason, while he thrust letters at the same moment into his hand containing proof of her numerous infidelities. He contrived indeed to prevent the children being shown to him; but the Vestal Vibidia forced her way into the emperor's presence, and claimed perhaps the privilege of her order to save a passing criminal from death. Narcissus was obliged to assure her that his master would himself hear the culprit, and give her an opportunity of defence.<sup>1</sup>

Meeting of  
Claudius and  
Messalina.

Claudius meanwhile uttered not a word. Vitellius affected ignorance of the circumstances alleged, and shrank from the responsibility of giving any orders. Narcissus took the lead, and every

Execution of  
Silius, and  
judgment of his  
accomplices.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 33, 34.

one yielded to him the position he had thus boldly assumed. He required the house of Silius to be thrown open, and caused the emperor to be conducted thither. In the hall stood the image of Silius the father, disgraced by Tiberius, which the senate had ordered to be overthrown; while the effigies of the Neros and Drusi, the kinsmen of the emperor himself, were placed ignominiously behind it. When his indignation had been sufficiently inflamed by this spectacle, which seemed of itself to proclaim the criminality of the culprit's projects, Claudius was hurried to the camp. The prætorians stood to arms to receive him: he was thrust on the tribunal, and, prompted by Narcissus, made to utter a few confused words, whereupon they called aloud for the condign punishment of the guilty. Silius, arrested and brought in fetters to the spot, declined to defend himself; nor would he stoop to any entreaties except only for speedy death. He was executed forthwith, together with Titius, Vettius, and altogether seven knights of distinguished family, accused of abetting him in his crime.<sup>1</sup> Mnester the dancer was added to the number, that, among so many honourable victims, no pity might seem to be extended to a mere ignoble player, though he vehemently protested that no man had so stoutly resisted the seductions of Messalina, and that he was among the first on whom, had she succeeded, her resentment was destined to fall. Another youth of family, named Montanus, was included in the proscription, for no other crime than that of having for a single day found favour in the eyes of the adulteress.

Nevertheless Messalina still hoped. She had withdrawn again to the gardens of Lucullus, and was there engaged in

<sup>1</sup> The "lex Julia de adulteris" required that there should be seven Roman citizens witnesses to a divorce; and if it be true that Claudius had actually divorced his wife in order to marry her to Silius, it seems not unlikely that these were the parties, whom it was thought advisable to remove. The act of divorce was read by a freedman, and this part may have been enacted by Mnester, Paulus in *Digest*, xxiv. 2. § 9. Comp. Juvenal, vi. 46.: "Collige sarcinulus, dicet libertus, et exi."

composing addresses of supplication to her husband, in which her pride and long-accustomed insolence still faintly struggled with her fears.

Vacillation of  
Claudius and  
death of Me-  
salina.

Narcissus was not insensible to his danger, and was anxious to strike his last blow without delay. But the emperor still paltered with the treason. He had retired to his palace; he had bathed, anointed, and lain down to supper; and warmed with wine and generous cheer, he had actually despatched a message to the *poor creature*, as he called her, bidding her come the next day and plead her cause before him. Narcissus knew how easy might be the passage from compassion to love; even the solitary night and the vacant couch would kindle, he feared, a sentiment of yearning and compunction in the fond dotard's mind. Gliding from the chamber, he boldly ordered a tribune and some centurions to go and slay his victim. *Such*, he said, *was the emperor's command*; and his word was obeyed without hesitation. Under the direction of the freedman Euodus, the armed men sought the outcast in her gardens, where she lay prostrate on the ground, by the side of her mother Lepida. While their fortunes flourished dissensions had existed between the two; but now, in her last distress, the mother had refused to desert her child, and only strove to nerve her resolution to a voluntary death. *Life*, she urged, *is over; nought remains to look for but a decent exit from it*. But the soul of the reprobate was corrupted by her vices; she retained no sense of honour; she continued to weep and groan as if hope still existed; when suddenly the doors were burst open, the tribune and his swordsmen appeared before her, and Euodus assailed her, dumb-stricken as she lay, with contumelious and brutal reproaches. Roused at last to the consciousness of her desperate condition, she took a weapon from one of the men's hands and pressed it trembling against her throat and bosom. Still she wanted resolution to give the thrust, and it was by a blow of the tribune's falchion that the horrid deed was finally accomplished. The death of Asiaticus was avenged on the very spot; the hot blood of the wanton

smoked on the pavement of his gardens, and stained with a deeper hue the variegated marbles of Lucullus. The body was given up to her mother. Claudius had not yet risen from table when it was announced to him that Messalina was no more. Whether she had fallen by her own hand or by another's was not distinctly declared; nor did he inquire. Again he called for wine, pledged his guests, heard songs and music, and exhausted all the formalities of the banquet. Nor on the following day did he allude to the circumstance, or manifest any emotion of joy or hatred, of anger or sorrow, neither on seeing the triumphant foes of Messalina, nor her sorrowing children. The senate favoured the oblivion he seemed to court for the event, by decreeing that her name should be effaced from all public and private monuments. Narcissus was rewarded with the ornaments of the quæstorship.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the circumstances of the fall of Messalina, as they were commonly related and believed. Stamped with the authority of Tacitus and Juvenal, they have since been received and repeated by all historians of the empire. Whatever the crimes of the miserable woman may have been,—and the stain of wantonness, as well as of cruelty so often in her station allied to it, is indelibly attached to her name,—there seems reason to surmise that her enormities have been exaggerated by sinister influence, and that the last fatal act, in particular, for which she suffered, was misrepresented by a monstrous artifice. It may still remain doubtful whether she was the victim of Agrippina's ambition or of the fears of the freedmen; whether these two powers combined together for her overthrow, or whether each followed its own objects with mutual jealousy and distrust. The factions which still festered in

Intrigues for  
providing a  
successor to  
Messalina.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 37, 38.; Dion, lx. 31.; Suet. *Claud.* 39. This writer mentions, as an instance of the forgetfulness or absence of mind of Claudius, that after the death of Messalina, he was heard to ask at supper, *Why my lady did not come?* "our domina non venitret." Messalina can hardly have been more than twenty-three or twenty-four at her death.

the bosom of the palace soon made themselves odiously apparent. During the first fever of his apprehensions, and while still, perhaps, under the wing of his faithful prætorians, Claudius, it is said, in the fulness of his heart, had made confidants of his soldiers, and had declared to them, that since matrimony had succeeded so ill with him, never again would he subject himself to the caprices of another consort; if he forgot this vow they might hack him in pieces with their swords.<sup>1</sup> But this resolution was of very short duration. His freedmen had determined otherwise; the most powerful among them sought each to secure his power by raising a client of his own to the first place in his affections, and he was too easily led by the artifices of those about him to make any resistance to wishes which were seconded by his own amorous temperament. But he was perplexed by the difficulty of choosing between the candidates offered for his selection, all of whom were equally ready to yield to him. Narcissus intrigued for Ælia Petina, the same whom Claudius had formerly repudiated; Callistus for Lollia Paulina, the rejected of the emperor Caius, while Pallas became the champion of Agrippina herself. The first was recommended on the ground of her former intimacy, as well as her connexion with the imperial house through the family of the Antonii; the second had the merit, in addition to her immense riches, of being childless, and therefore the less likely to regard Britannicus with jealousy; the last, besides her descent from Germanicus, and the popular favour which accompanied her, had the advantage of being able to plead her own cause covertly, by the opportunities consanguinity gave her of hanging fondly upon her uncle, and enticing him with her unsuspected caresses.<sup>2</sup> If the charms of Agrippina, then perhaps three and thirty years of age, had already passed their prime, her pow-

Ambition and  
artifices of  
Agrippina.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 26.: "Quatenus sibi matrimonia male cederent permansurum se in cœlibatu; ac nisi permanisisset non recusaturum confodiri manibus ipsorum."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 26.: "Per jus oculi et blanditiarum occasiones pellectus in amorem." Of the three rivals Tacitus says, "Suam quæque nobilitatem, for-



ers of artifice and intrigue had reached their full maturity; and she soon effected the impression at which she aimed.<sup>1</sup> Ere yet the emperor had avowed his intention of espousing her, she was conscious that the prize was within her reach, and began to exercise over him the influence of a wife. She began already to extend her views to the elevation of her son Domitius by uniting him to the orphan Octavia; and as the girl was affianced to Lucius Silanus, the son of the murdered Appius, she did not hesitate to plan the frustration of that arrangement by aiming a scandalous charge against the betrothed husband. She gained over Vitellius; this supple courtier pretended, that as censor two years before, he had noted the young man's immoralities, and now insinuated a charge of incest against him.<sup>2</sup> Claudius, as guardian of the public virtue, was shocked, as the confederates expected, at this odious imputation, and allowed Vitellius, although the censorship was passed and the lustrum closed, to promulgate his edict for removing him from the senate.<sup>3</sup> The blow was the more severe inasmuch as he had been advanced that year to the prætorship; and he was now degraded without being heard in his own defence, perhaps even before he was aware of the conspiracy against him. This was the first step towards rescinding the act of his betrothal, which speedily

miam, opus contendere." The first qualification seems to apply especially to Petina, the second to Agrippina, and the last to Lollia; and it seems clear from what follows (*Ann.* xii. 22.) that the divorced wife of Caius had not been deprived of the magnificent dowry she had brought him.

<sup>1</sup> Agrippina seems to have been born in 769. Suetonius tells us (*Calig.* 7.) that the three sisters were born in consecutive years, and the birth of Julia (Livilla in Suetonius) is placed by Tacitus in 771. Agrippina seems to have been the eldest of the three.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 4.: "Nomine Censoris serviles fallacias obtegna." Vitellius had been joined with Claudius in the office. Of Silanus Seneca says (*Apocol.* 8.): "Sororem suam festivissimam omnium puellarum, quam omnes Venerem vocarent, maluit Junonem vocare."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Lecto pridem Senatu." The order had been duly revised, and in strictness the removal of the culprit from its ranks should have awaited another lectio.

followed. The office to which he had been preferred in consideration of his affinity to the imperial house, he was required to resign on the last day of the year; and thus disgraced he was suffered, for a time at least, to hide himself in obscurity, while the way was smoothed for the destined nuptials of Domitius and Octavia.

Yet an obstacle still intervened between Agrippina and the elevation to which she aspired. Ancient usage and the national sentiment long engrafted upon it, though with no express legislative declaration, forbade among the Romans the marriage of an uncle and niece. Claudius had just declared his horror at incest, and here was an union proposed to him to which that term in its full force at least popularly applied. It had been rumoured, indeed, whether truly or not, that the first Cæsar was prepared to defy the national sense of delicacy; but Claudius had less courage, and if it was easy to overcome his moral scruples, it was more difficult to confirm his resolution. Again Vitellius came forward to Agrippina's assistance. He took occasion to demand publicly of the emperor whether he would submit to the blind prejudices of the populace, or be swayed by the counsel and authority of the senate? Claudius decorously replied that he was himself only one of the citizens, and could not venture to controvert the judgment of the fathers of the republic. *Then repair, I conjure you, to the palace, and there await my coming,* said Vitellius earnestly; and then entering the Curia, he besought an immediate hearing on a subject, most important, as he declared, to the commonwealth. After expatiating with feeling on the splendid solitude of the Cæsar in the recesses of his palace, and his need of a faithful partner to share his pleasures and anxieties, he protested, that if Claudius now yearned for a consort, he had amply proved by his long devotion to the laws that he was yielding to no unworthy impulse. The orator proceeded to enlarge on the happy fortune of the times, in having a prince who sought only a legal marriage, instead of invading, as others had been known to do, the

The senate sanctions the union of an uncle with a niece.

marriage rights of the citizens; and then recommending the claims and merits of Agrippina, he argued with all the art of a practised rhetorician against the prejudices which seemed to forbid so eligible an union. Other nations, he said, permitted such alliances; nor was it beneath the dignity of Rome to consult the customs even of foreigners. Formerly the marriage of cousins had been prohibited, yet its recent permission had produced no evil.<sup>1</sup> Similar results, he argued, would follow a wise relaxation in the present instance also; and prejudices, after all, were the growth of habit and usage, and would follow the current of legislation. The compliance of a part, at least, of his audience outran even the eloquence of the speaker. The harangue was hardly concluded before a tumult of assentation arose which admitted of no further discussion, but threatened, if he yet hesitated, to overbear the prince's scruples by force. A multitude had already collected, crying aloud that the Roman people was of one mind with the senators. Vitellius swiftly bore the news to his anxious master, and Claudius, passing rapidly through the crowd of the forum, amidst a burst of acclamations, entered the Curia and moved for a decree to legalize the marriages in question. Claudius and Agrippina were united

• Marriage of  
Claudius and  
Agrippina.

in the year 802. It might seem a delicate mode of flattery to contract these preposterous alliances; but a knight, named Alledius, was the only citizen who could be induced, by the hope of the prince's, or even of Agrippina's favour, to do such violence to natural feeling.<sup>2</sup> This, however, was of little importance; the conscience of the feeble Claudius was easily put to sleep, and it

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 6.: "Sobrinarum diu ignorata." On the marriage of cousins german, the commentators refer to Plutarch, *Quest. Rom.* 6., who shows the occasion, but not the date of the restriction being removed. The union of Marcellus and Julia was an illustrious instance in later times. But marriage of uncles with nieces was forbidden. The law of Claudius licensed marriage with a brother's daughter, but not with a sister's, and this distinction was in force in the time of Gaius. See *Inst.* i. 62

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 7.

became the business of his mistress, now enthroned by his side, to lull it constantly by gentle opiates, through the course of wickedness on which she was about to enter.<sup>1</sup>

It is not unimportant to notice these lingering scruples, this solemn discussion, and this sudden downfall of the barriers of religious principle, at a moment when the whole bent of legislation had been studiously directed to preserve or restore the sanctions of ancient usage. They mark, on the one hand, the general observance thus far of ancient forms; while, on the other, they allow us to perceive how hollow that observance was, and how easily it could be overruled by modern licentiousness. They may lead us indeed to reject as incredible the common story of Messalina's impudent no-marriage; nevertheless, they may prepare us for violations not less audacious, of the laws of nature and of man, which we shall meet with hereafter. The authority of the senate and the licence of the Cæsar to create law and right of their own sovereign will, were thus established with the concurrence of the people, and to their entire satisfaction; yet the authority and licence were shared by these two still co-ordinate powers; it remained yet to be seen whether either could destroy the other, or if destroyed continue to exist without it.

The authority of the senate and Emperor over matters of national usage.

A century earlier the wretch who was driven to despair by persecution stalked with gloomy resolution to the hearthstone of his enemy, and slew himself upon it, to establish an avenging demon in his house for ever.<sup>2</sup> But this superstition had now died away, or the chambers of the Cæsar were no longer accessible, and the

Suicide of L. Silanus.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 4-7. Suetonius tells us that Claudius repealed a provision of the Julian law introduced by Tiberius, which forbade men of sixty years from contracting marriage. It has been supposed that this was done to legalize his own union with Agrippina, as though at this time he was himself almost on the verge of sixty. See *Claud.* 23. and the note of Baumgarten Crusius. But he was actually fifty-eight only.

<sup>2</sup> See the story of Cicero in Plutarch, *Cic.* 47. above, ch. xvi.

suicide could seek his last consolation only in the hope of fixing on the tyrant the indignation of his fellow countrymen. Silanus chose the moment of Agrippina's triumph to put an end to his own life, assured perhaps that he could not long escape her enmity, and exulting in the power of casting at least a gloom over the city on the day of her ill-omened nuptials. Nevertheless her cruelty was restrained neither by shame nor fear: his sister Calvina, the presumed partner of his guilt, was sentenced to exile by the voice of the subservient senators; and to the decree which inflicted this punishment, Claudius caused a clause to be added enjoining the lustration of the city by solemn sacrifices.<sup>1</sup> The citizens, who had before scowled or murmured, laughed now at the notion that at such a moment, when one illustrious inoest was openly paraded, the secret guilt of another should require a special expiation. It is said, however, that Agrippina was moved, even in the first flush of her success, by the disgust at her conduct, and sought to extenuate her disfavour by recalling Seneca from exile, and promoting him to the prætorship. The philosopher was already in high repute for his character and acquirements, and his appointment to the care of her child's education was perhaps the best, as well as the most popular, that could be made. It is probable, however, from his sharing the disgrace of Julia, that he was previously connected with Agrippina herself, and held a conspicuous place in the clique or faction which had roused Messalina's apprehensions.<sup>2</sup>

Recall of Seneca from exile.

L. Domitius betrothed to Octavia.

The marriage of the mother was quickly followed by the betrothal of the son, then in his twelfth year, to Octavia, an alliance for which Claudius had been gradually prepared by the counsels of the friends he most relied on. Domitius took his place at once by the side of Britannicus in every favour the doting emperor could bestow: nevertheless, the complete ascendancy she

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c. For the date (A. v. 802.) see Clinton, *Fast. Rom.*

had acquired over her facile husband failed to allay the jealousies of the new-made empress. Of *Ælia Petina* indeed, who seems to have been defended by the insignificance of her character, we hear no more; but the rivalry of the rich and noble *Lollia* was not to be forgiven. Repulsed by one emperor and disappointed of another, she was accused of consulting the Chaldeans about the imperial nuptials.<sup>1</sup> *Claudius* himself condescended to harangue against her in the senate; but in denouncing her guilt, he wandered, as usual, into historic details on the greatness and antiquity of her family, and commiserating her fall, contented himself with demanding her banishment from Italy, with the loss of her famous fortune, a sum of five million sesterces being alone reserved to her. But *Agrippina*, it seems, was dissatisfied with the lenity of this sentence, and, according to common belief, sent a tribune to invite or compel her to kill herself.<sup>2</sup> About the same time another matron named *Calpurnia*,—whether she was the same who has before been mentioned as a favourite of the emperor does not clearly appear,—was also disgraced by the artifices of the empress, for no other cause than because *Claudius* had been heard to speak in praise of her beauty: it was admitted, indeed, that the remark had been made in perfect innocence, and the Fury of the palace did not push her anger to extremities.

*Agrippina* still marched on triumphantly. *Claudius*, beset by freedmen, and especially by *Pallas*, the creature and, as was supposed, the paramour of his consort, yielded to the persuasions which were blandly urged upon him. He was reminded of the example of *Augustus*, and again of *Tiberius*, in fortifying the position of their own children by calling older kinsmen to its support. Both precedents were of evil augury. But

*Domitina*,  
adopted by  
*Claudius*, as-  
sumes the  
name of *Nero*.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Dion tells a horrid story, that when the head of *Lollia* was brought for her inspection, *Agrippina* forced open the mouth with her own hand, to look for certain marks in the teeth, by which to assure herself of its identity. lx. 32.

the imperial pedant was proud to walk in the steps of his renowned predecessors; and in the year 803, the next after his marriage, he consented to adopt Domitius into the Claudian house, to place him formally on the same line of succession with his own son, and inasmuch as he was three years the senior, to give him actual precedence in the career of honours. This, it was remarked by the genealogists, was the first instance of the adoption of a son by any Claudius of the patrician branch of that illustrious house, which had maintained its name and honours in direct male descent from the era of Attus Clausus the Sabine, if not of Clausus the ally of Æneas. It proved fatal to the race. L. Domitius thus introduced into his stepfather's family received the name of Nero, a name long renowned for the obligations it had laid on Rome, but destined henceforth to become infamous for ever throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> The marriage to which he was pledged with his cousin Octavia, now become his sister, was incestuous and abominable in the eyes of his countrymen. But worse than this was the position of jealous rivalry in which he was placed with regard to the injured Britannicus. This poor child was supposed, even at his tender years, to have some quickness of parts, and he did not fail to perceive the guile which lurked beneath the pretended affection of Agrippina. One by one the slaves and attendants of his childhood, between whom and himself there existed a mutual attachment, were removed, as he well knew, by her artifices, and replaced by creatures of her own; and by these he was educated as the son of a plebeian client, rather than as a noble by birth, still less as heir to the purple.<sup>2</sup> The elevation, as it may now be called, of this cruel stepmother to the title of Augusta by a decree of the senate seemed to crown her personal ambition.<sup>3</sup> Henceforth she laboured for her

<sup>1</sup> Hor. *Od.* iv. 4. 37.: "Quid debeas, O Roma, Neronibus," &c.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, ix. 32.: ὡς καὶ τῶν τυχεύων τινὰ τρέφεσθαι ἐπίειμι.

<sup>3</sup> Livia was styled Augusta after her husband's decease; Messalina bore the title on her coins, though these perhaps are provincial: but Agrippina was the first wife of a reigning emperor who enjoyed it by a decree of the senate. See Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 252. foll.

son's advancement only. There were few that did not anticipate the transfer of the empire to her child from those of Messalina, and the commiseration of the citizens for the hapless Britannicus was already strongly excited.

But the contentions of rival princes and the conflicts of civil war were ever flitting before the minds of the occupants of power at Rome. The prætorians had decided the fate of empire at the last vacancy; the legions might be expected to interfere at the

Agrippina  
courts the  
army.

next, and throw their weight into the scale between Nero and Britannicus. It was doubtless with a view to conciliate the soldiers that Agrippina's masculine spirit aspired to positions which had hitherto been never occupied by women; that she displayed herself to the citizens and the army in the character of a chief of the legions. To plant

a colony was a proper function of an imperator, of one to whom, among other powers, that of

Her foundation  
of the Colonia  
Agrippinensis,  
or Cologne.

taking the auspices and performing the proper rites, was duly intrusted by the vote of the Curies. It was the boast of Agrippina that she was the first, possibly she was the last also, of Roman women who founded a colony of Roman veterans.<sup>1</sup> The illustrious city of Cologne owes its origin to the caprice of this empress, who transformed a village of the Ubii on the Rhine into a stronghold of Roman dominion.<sup>2</sup> Here, or in the camp adjacent, Agrippina had herself been born; here had stood the prætorium of her father Germanicus, and here perhaps her grandsire Agrippa had effected the passage of the frontier stream. Agrippina was fond also of assuming a conspicuous place in military spectacles.

<sup>1</sup> The foundation of a city by Dido in the *Æneid*, and her sitting before the temple *septa armis*, indicated to the Roman reader that she was a queen, not less plainly than the royal title applied in so marked a manner to her.

<sup>2</sup> *Tac. Ann.* xii. 27. If originally founded by Agrippa himself, as another passage of Tacitus (*German.* 28.) seems to imply, it must have been reconstituted by Agrippina, and received from her the name which is found in inscriptions, of Colonia Claudia Augusta Agrippinensium. It is curious that this abnormal colony has alone of all its kindred foundations retained to the present day the name of Colonia.



When Caractacus, the conquered British chief, was brought in chains before the emperor's tribunal at Rome, where he was surrounded by his guards and the officers, she seated herself on another tribunal by his side, and received together with him the homage of the captive and his family.<sup>1</sup> That a woman should thus take her station in front of the standards was considered bold and unfeminine: the veteran Pliny deemed it worthy of grave remark, as a token of the times in which he had lived, that he had himself in his youth beheld the consort of Claudius witnessing the sea-fight of the Fucine lake, arrayed in a soldier's cloak, by the side of the emperor.<sup>2</sup> Nor less surprised perhaps were the foreign envoys to see her seated together with the emperor when admitted to a solemn audience. But Agrippina, says Tacitus, affected to be a partner in the empire which her sire had defended and her grandsire won: she boasted herself the daughter of one emperor, the sister of another, the consort of a third; moreover, she expected, and indeed was destined, to become the mother of a fourth; a combination of which there was no previous, and probably no later example.<sup>3</sup> Her face was associated with the emperor's on the coinage.<sup>4</sup> It was remarked also that her ascending the Capitol in the car-pentum, or litter reserved for the priests and the divine images, was an assumption of honours beyond her sex; but this distinction had been conceded by Augustus to Livia, and by Claudius himself to Messalina. But, in pride and outward show, no less than in dissoluteness of manners and

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 36, 37.

<sup>2</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 8.: "Nos vidimus Agrippinam Claudii principis, edente eo navalis prolii spectaculum, assidentem ei indutam paludamento."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 42. Germanicus, as the quasi-associate of Tiberius, Claudius, Caius, and Nero. So it was said of Elizabeth, daughter of our Edward IV. and queen of Henry VII., that she was "daughter to a king, sister to a king, wife to a king, and mother to a king, and to two queens also." Strype's *Memorials*, i. c. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Eckhel, *Doct. Numm.* vi. 257.: "Fuit Agrippina ex Augustorum uxoribus prima, cujus imaginem perinde atque suam in nummis signari indulsit maritus."

relentless bloodshed, Agrippina had now learnt to rival the predecessor she had overthrown.<sup>1</sup>

The advancement of the youthful Nero to imperial power was in progress even at this early period. In the year 804 he was invested with the gown of manhood, and designated for consul, at the instance of the devoted senate, as soon as he should reach his twentieth year. But in the mean time he was deputed to hold proconsular, or vice-imperial, power beyond the city; which, as he was still retained beneath the roof of the palace, was for the present a mere honorary title, and only a presage of the substance that was to follow. He received, moreover, the flattering style of Prince of the Roman Youth. Agrippina took occasion from these special distinctions, to mark in every way the difference between her son and the still infant Britannicus: the one was to be regarded as a man, the other to be treated always as a child; the one was exhibited to the people in official robes, while the other appeared only, if he appeared at all, in the prætexta of the pupil and the minor. Meanwhile centurions and tribunes, freedmen and tutors, as many as seemed to favour the offspring of Messalina, or even to commiserate his fortune, were removed from about him on various pretences; and his once casually calling his brother by his original name of Domitius was construed into an insult, to which he must have been instigated by the evil disposed among his friends and attendants.<sup>2</sup>

Nero introduced to public distinctions.

A. D. 51.  
A. U. 804.

Whatever, indeed, were the crimes and excesses of the wretched Messalina, there can be no doubt that her artifices or, if we may so believe, her genial fascinations had surrounded her with many friends, and the enterprise of Narcissus against her had not been unattended with danger to himself and to the emperor. We have seen that Vitellius and Lægus had refrained from stimulating Claudius against her, and that Lælius Geta, the pre-

Increasing influence of Agrippina.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, ix. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. xii. 41.

fect, was deemed so attached to her interests as to be an object of distrust and apprehension to his agonized master. Another officer of the guard, named Crispinus, was still regarded as her partisan; and both these men, important from the position they held, were supposed to be still devoted to the interests of her desolate children. Agrippina watched with sleepless vigilance for the moment to supplant them, and at last she prevailed on the emperor to risk a revolution of the palace by dismissing them from their posts, and replacing them with a favourite and staunch adherent of her own. The new prefect, Afranius Burrhus, was brave and able, and once armed with authority from the emperor, made himself master of the camp without a struggle.<sup>1</sup> We shall see hereafter that he was, moreover, independent and honest, as far perhaps as his position could allow; but he understood that it was by Agrippina that he had been advanced, and by her he might at any time be displaced, and he attached himself to her interests and the faction of her son, as far as it was now opposed to that of Britannicus. The destruction which fell on many of the freedmen may probably be ascribed to their adherence to the party of Messalina; Callistus, the patron of Lollia, seems to have sunk into obscurity; while Narcissus, who had recommended Petina, could with difficulty retain, notwithstanding his signal services, any portion of his former influence. The paramount sway which Agrippina now exercised over her spouse, and over all who sought to retain his favour, was remarkably manifested in her saving Vitellius from a charge of Majesty brought against him by a senator; who not only failed in his prosecution, but was himself sentenced to banishment, and interdicted fire and water. Nevertheless, though Agrippina triumphed, the people were uneasy at the prospect of civil war, or unnatural murder which seemed opening before them. The year 804 was celebrated for the prodigies which attended it: among the most calamitous of these was an

earthquake, by which many houses in Rome were overturned, and many people killed in the panic which ensued. The harvest failed generally throughout the provinces, and the supply of corn to the capital ran low. Only fifteen days' consumption remained in the granaries. The populace rioted for bread, and actually attacked the emperor when transacting business in the forum. They drove him tumultuously from his tribunal, and would have injured and perhaps torn him in pieces, but for the prompt succour of a military force.<sup>1</sup>

Augustus had required that every revelation of the future should be stamped with the license of government, and Tiberius had expelled from Italy the pretenders to astrological science. Claudius, in the spirit of imitation, perhaps, rather than of intelligent policy, sought to enforce this edict, which the citizens had treated with scornful disregard. The measure indeed, as Tacitus declares, was fruitless; yet it hardly deserves to be called harsh. Perhaps its immediate motive was the reputed crime of a young Scribonianus, the son of the officer who had revolted in Dalmatia. He was accused of intriguing against the emperor's life by consulting these dangerous impostors. Claudius was alarmed, but he was also mortified at the ingratitude, as he esteemed it, of one whose life and dignity he had spared in the wreck of his father's fortunes. Scribonianus was banished; nor did he long survive. Some pretended that he fell a victim to poison, while others affirmed that his death was merely natural; so impossible was it to arrive at the truth in such matters, so indifferent, it may be added, were the Romans generally to the truth.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the emperor continued to exert unremitting vigilance in maintaining the dignity of the sena-

Measures of  
Claudius for  
maintaining  
morality and  
good order.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 43. Suetonius (*Claud.* 18.) says that he was pelted with crusts of bread. This licentious conduct of the populace does not imply any special contempt for Claudius. One of the most deeply respected of all the emperors was treated in the same manner at a later period. See Aurel. Victor, *Epit.* 30. in *Anton. Pio.*

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 52.: "Ut quisque credidit vulgaverit."

torial order: he took measures for removing from its ranks the members who had descended into poverty, and such as on this account voluntarily resigned received his marked approbation. The thunders of the law, conceived in a spirit of ancient fanaticism, were levelled against matrons who had degraded their class by forming connexions with slaves; such abandoned wretches were to be reduced to the state of servitude themselves. It had been often remarked that the freedmen were generally the harshest in their treatment of the less fortunate brethren from whose ranks they had themselves recently emerged; and it was Pallas, the pampered paramour of two empresses, who advised this measure, severe against the unfortunate women, but doubtless still more severe against their more miserable partners in guilt.<sup>1</sup> He received his master's thanks, however, for the wholesome austerity of his counsel, and was recompensed with the prætorian ornaments, and a colossal grant of public money by the subservient senators. A Cornelius Scipio went so far in adulation as to affirm that he was sprung from Pallas, the legendary king of Arcadia, and moved that he should be specially thanked for deigning to assist their deliberations, and take his place among the servants of the emperor. Claudius undertook however to declare that his freedman was satisfied with honorary distinctions, and would beg respectfully to decline the present, and continue in his state of actual poverty; a poverty, it was remarked, of some three hundred millions of sesterces.<sup>2</sup>

The favour and authority of this fortunate upstart continued still to increase. He was able to protect his brother Felix, who had been advanced already through his interest to the procuratorship of Judea, where his exactions had driven the people into riot and

Claudius extends the privileges of the knights.

<sup>1</sup> Thus the younger Pliny, telling the story of one Largius Macedo, who was attacked by his slaves, says that he was "Superbus alioqui dominus et sævus, et qui servisse patrem suum parum, immo nimium, meminisset." *Epist.* iii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. xii. 53.: "Sestertii ter millics:" 300 million sesterces equal about 2,400,000*l.*

revolt. It was at his instance also, perhaps, that Claudius now empowered the knights who managed the fisc in the provinces, and even in Rome, to exercise jurisdiction or judicial authority, such as was entrusted to the magistrates, the consuls and prætors at home and their deputies abroad. This principle of arrangement had already been sanctioned by Augustus with respect to the exceptional government of Egypt; it had been extended sometimes to certain other localities; but it was reserved for Claudius to establish it generally as an instrument of monarchical rule, by which authority derived directly from the chief of the state was placed throughout the empire on the same level as that of the officers of the people.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of Agrippina continued still in the ascendant, nor to the end of her husband's life did it experience any decline; for Claudius was not naturally capricious; he was as patient in suffering as in acting, and never seems to have revolted, even mentally, against the domestic tyranny to which he had now once more subjected himself. Almost the last public act of his principate was receiving, at her instigation, the scandalous charges now brought against Statilius Taurus, a man of wealth and ancestral dignity, who had recently returned to Rome laden, as it was affirmed, with the spoils of the province of Africa. The crime objected to him was not, however, extortion in his government only, but the more odious practice of magic. Claudius allowed his case to be brought under the cognisance of the senate; it was believed, however, that both charges were equally false, and prompted solely by the malice of Agrippina, who coveted his house and gardens. But neither the sympathy of his peers, nor the common persuasion of his innocence, availed to save the

Continued influence of Agrippina.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 60.: "Claudius omne jus tradidit de quo totiens seditione aut armis certatum." See Lipsius, *Excurs.* ii. on Tac. *Ann.* xii. The procurators of the emperor were knights, and Tacitus seems to regard this as a settlement of the ancient contest between the senate and the equestrian order for the *Judicia*.

object of a powerful enmity. The accused, proud and indignant, preferred a voluntary death to the humiliation of replying to his accusers before a tribunal of freedmen and courtiers; and the senators, who were now seldom consulted in proceedings which related to the emperor's safety and dignity, could only express their sentiments by expelling the prosecutor from their assembly, with a burst of petulant disgust which resisted even Agrippina's efforts to protect him.<sup>1</sup>

But this covert persecution of one hapless family, and these attacks on the most eminent of the nobles, were exceptions to the general posture of affairs, which were still for the most part conducted with temper and moderation. It was the policy of Claudius, or his advisers, to maintain the populace in good humour at whatever cost, and this might still be effected, at the expense of the tax-payers of the provinces, by multiplied shows and reiterated largesses. While the aged emperor's sun was thus setting with a milder and serener ray than might have been anticipated from the elements of storm and confusion with which he seemed to be surrounded, another light was rising in the opposite quarter, portending, as was fondly anticipated, a season of beneficent rule and widely extended happiness. In the course of 806, while still only in his sixteenth year, Nero was permitted to celebrate his marriage with Octavia. In order to acquire some popularity for an union of so questionable a character, the young prince was instructed to come forward in public, and graciously plead, in speeches made for him by his tutor, the cause of liberality for more than one distinguished client. He harangued first in behalf of the venerable community of Ilium, the ancestor of Rome, the parent of the Julian race; the glories of which, real or fabled, he set forth with eloquence and ingenuity, and demanded that it should for their sake be relieved from all public burdens for ever.<sup>2</sup> Again he pleaded for the colony

Nero comes forward as the advocate of popular measures.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 59. A. U. 806.

<sup>2</sup> It seems not improbable that Lucan makes his apparently purposeless digression to describe the site of Troy (*Phars.* ix. 964. foll.), in compliment to

of Bononia, for which, when distressed by a ruinous conflagration, he solicited a grant of money. About the same time the Rhodians were allowed to recover their autonomy, which seems to have been withdrawn from them on account of some domestic sedition; and tribute was remitted to Apamea for five years in consideration of the damage it had sustained from an earthquake.<sup>1</sup> Claudius himself made an harangue, which seems to have been highly characteristic of his pedantic style, in favour of granting the boon of immunity to Cos. He spoke largely on the antiquity of the Coans. The Argives, he said, or rather Cœus, the father of Latona, was the first inhabitant of the island; by and by *Æsculapius* brought thither the divine art of healing, which was practised there with eminent success by his descendants from generation to generation. Having enumerated many of these skilful practitioners, and distinguished the periods in which they flourished, the emperor came at last to the special praise of his own physician Xenophon, and declared that he yielded to his entreaties in relieving his countrymen from all imperial contributions, and devoting their island from henceforth to the service of the god of healing only.<sup>2</sup>

The last year of the emperor's life and reign, the 807th of the city, opened once more with prodigies of evil import, which were supposed to betoken the decay of public principle and deterioration of national sentiment.<sup>3</sup> It was natural, perhaps, to augur

Further triumphs of Agrippina.

the interest his patron Nero thus showed in the sacred city. The young emperor may have taken to himself the lines applied to Julius:

"Gentis Iulæ vestris clarissimus aris

Dat pia thura nepos . . . .

Restituum populos; grata vice moenia reddent

Ausonidæ Phrygibus, Romanaque Pergama surgent."

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 58.; Suet. *Claud.* 25. *Ner.* 7. The young prince's orations were in Greek. It does not appear clearly, though it may, I think, be inferred from Tacitus, that these last indulgences were obtained by Nero, and I have left the statement equivocal as I found it.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 61. The Byzantians petitioned also for relief, and were exempted from payment for five years.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 64.: "Mutationem morum in deterius portendi."



that the advent of a young and gallant prince to power would commence a new era, both in government and in society; that the pensive retrospect of Augustus and his later imitator would be exchanged for a burst of buoyant anticipations, and that Nero would pay his court to the future, as Claudius had venerated the past. Among these portents, that which alone can interest us was the fact that all the chief magistracies lost, in the course of a few months, one of their occupants by death; a quæstor, an ædile, a tribune, a prætor, and a consul.<sup>1</sup> This fatality made a considerable impression upon the populace; but none of them was so much alarmed at these omens as Agrippina herself at the boding words which were heard to fall from Claudius in a moment of inebriation, *that it was his fate to suffer the crimes of all his consorts, but at last to punish them.*<sup>2</sup> The palace, it seems, was still distracted by female jealousies. It is remarkable, after the account we have perused of the unpardonable crime and condign punishment of Messalina, together with her guilty associates, that her mother was suffered still to haunt the precincts of power, and to intrigue against the woman who had succeeded in supplanting her daughter. Domitia Lepida, the sister of Cn. Domitius, and cousin as well as sister-in-law to Agrippina, was not many years her senior, and was still reputed little inferior to her in the autumn of their personal charms.<sup>3</sup> But the contest between them was not now for the heart of a paramour. The arts of Lepida were directed to diverting the childish reverence of Nero from his mother to his aunt, and the

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 64.; Dion, lx. 35. According to Suetonius the old man entertained a presentiment of his approaching end, and betrayed it more than once. *Claud.* 46.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Fatale sibi ut conjugum flagitia ferret dein puniret." Comp. Dion, lx. 34.; Suet. *Claud.* 43.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 64.: "Nec forma ætas opes multum distabant." If Agrippina was now thirty-eight, the mother of Messalina can hardly have been more than forty-five. This Domitia Lepida may be called the younger, to distinguish her from an elder sister of the same name, who will appear on the scene later (see Suet. *Ner.* 34.; Dion, lxi. 17).

caresses she lavished upon him seems to have had some effect on his warm and impressible temper. Agrippina trembled for her influence, not over the actual, but over the future emperor. Both these women, it is said, were equally dissolute in manners, equally violent in temper; each fought for possession of the young prince with the desperate determination to use her power with him to destroy the other. But the genius or the fortune of Agrippina prevailed. She suborned delators to charge her rival with the crime of seeking to marry Claudius after destroying his actual wife by incantations; to this was added the more palpable treason of raising a servile insurrection in Calabria. These charges were deemed to be sufficiently proved, and Claudius gave full scope to the vengeful cruelty of the conqueror. Lepida was condemned and executed, in spite of the remonstrances of Narcissus, rendered desperate himself by the overthrow of the only influence which had hitherto placed any check on the triumphant despotism of Agrippina. Narcissus had received the quæstorial ornaments as the reward of his services; but he had found himself outstripped in the race of favour by Pallas, the confidant of the new empress, and full of discontent and apprehension for himself, he was anxious to save the mother of his own victim, to counterpoise the power which had risen upon her fall.<sup>1</sup> He now muttered moodily to his friends that whether Britannicus or Nero succeeded to power, his own destruction was equally assured: nevertheless, his life, he insinuated, was ever at the service of his master; as he had tracked the adultery of Messalina and Silius, he had ample proofs to convict Pallas and Agrippina also; and he threatened to bring up the offspring of the late empress to avenge himself on the betrayers of his father and the real assassins of his mother.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 38.: "Decreta Narcisso quæstoriam insignia; levissimum fastidium ejus, cum supra Pallantem et Callistum ageret."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 65.: "Matris etiam interfectores ulcisceretur." It appears that Narcissus knew that, though himself the most prominent actor in the recent tragedy, there existed actual proof against Agrippina of an important share in the conspiracy.

Such were the conflicting schemes and interests by which, in addition to the ever-recurring cares of empire, the declining years of the most patient of masters were disturbed. But Claudius, now in his sixty-fourth year, and exhausted with toil at least as much as by the intemperance in which he may have indulged, fell sick at Rome, and was induced to quit his constant station in the city,—for he had pertinaciously denied himself the customary relaxation of occasional retreat to baths and villas,—for the medicinal air and water of Sinuessa.<sup>1</sup> Agrippina, we are assured, had long determined to hasten his still lingering end, and precipitate by a crime the advent of her son to power. But she continued anxiously to debate with herself what kind of poison to employ; fearing lest, if the agent were too active, the secret might betray itself, and again, if it were too slow and gradual, the victim might come to suspect the cause of his sensible decline, and take measures even in his last hours to defeat her aspirations. The crime of poisoning was rife in Rome. Caius had made elaborate experiments in the science, and many must have been his agents and familiars, who lived by pandering to the murderous passions of the day. One at least of these horrid professors, the infamous Locusta, has obtained a name in the annals of crime, and has been dignified by the grave irony of Tacitus with the title of an instrument of monarchy.<sup>2</sup> The men accused her of being the accomplice of many wicked wives who wished to rid themselves of their husbands; possibly she was equally accessible to either sex; but the only case recorded against her is that of Agrippina and Claudius, in which she was employed to prepare a potion for the unfortunate emperor. The substance

Decline of  
Claudius.

Agrippina con-  
trives to poison  
him.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, v. p. 351., Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxi. 4., Martial. xi. 8. See Hoeck, *Röm. Gesch.* i. 3. 330.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 66.: "Diu inter instrumenta regni habita." Comp. Juvenal, i. 71.:

"Instituitque rudes melior Locusta propinquas  
Per famam et populum nigros efferre maritos."

which she offered to compound was calculated to unsettle the mind without producing immediate death.<sup>1</sup> Halotus, one of the slaves of the palace, and the taster of the imperial viands, was engaged to administer the dose, which was concealed in a dish of mushrooms, the favourite delicacy of the emperor's supper table.<sup>2</sup> The treacherous morsel was swallowed; but from the quantity of wine, as was supposed, that he had drunk, or from the natural relief of his overloaded stomach, the poison failed of effect.<sup>3</sup> The murderess was alarmed. She feared discovery from the suspicions of Claudius, or from the treachery of her detestable allies. Throwing away further precautions, she called on the physician Xenophon, whom she had already secured in case of need. This man thrust a poisoned feather down the sufferer's throat under pretence of aiding him to vomit, and this time at least the venom was deadly and the effect sufficiently rapid.<sup>4</sup>

Claudius fell senseless on his couch, and was removed, as if fainting, to his chamber. Agrippina called for flannels and restoratives, and pretended to apply them to the body, while it lay in the agonies of death, and even after the spirit had departed. The sickness of the emperor was now publicly announced, and

Death of Claudius and succession of Nero.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Exquisitum aliquid placebat quod turbaret mentem et mortem differret."

<sup>2</sup> It appears from inscriptions that the office of taster was already known in the court of Augustus. Gruter, p. 602., Hoeck, *Röm. Gesch.* i. 3. 329.

<sup>3</sup> The words of Tacitus (xii. 67.), "Socordiane Claudii an vinolentia," with some varieties of reading, having caused much perplexity. If they are correct, I should imagine *socordia* to mean the languid action of the internal organs, which might be supposed, with what reason I know not, to retard the operation of the poison. Ruperti quotes from Livy, xxvi. 14.: "Impletis cibus vinoque venæ minus efficacem in maturanda morte vim veneni faciunt." By the words, "nec vim medicaminis statim intellectam," Walther supposes that the *guests* did not at once perceive that poison had been given: but *intelligere* is the proper word for feeling the effect of a medicine or a wound. Comp. Statius, *Theb.* xi. 546.: "Mox intellecto magis ac magis æger anhelat Vulnere."

<sup>4</sup> Tac. l. c. There is surely some confusion in the account of Tacitus, whatever may be the corruption of his text. The first poison, as he says himself,

the senate summoned to hear the vows of the consuls and priests for his recovery. While these ceremonies were in progress, however, measures were preparing in the palace for the succession of Nero: the doors were kept strictly closed, and placed under guard of the trustiest officers. Agrippina, affecting an excess of grief, held Britannicus clasped to her bosom, calling him her pet and darling, and the image of his dear father, and keeping him by every artifice from quitting the chamber. His sisters, Antonia and Octavia, were in like manner detained within the palace; while rumours were spread that the sufferer was reviving, and despatches sent to the guards and legions, declaring that all went well, and that the astrologers predicted his happy recovery. Thus twelve or more hours passed. On the morrow at mid-day, the thirteenth of October, the doors of the palace were suddenly thrown open, and Nero, with Burrhus at his side, walked straight to the guardhouse, at the outer gate.<sup>1</sup> At the prefect's word of command, he was received with acclamations, and lifted in a litter on the men's shoulders. Some indeed still hung back and murmured, *Where is Britannicus?* but there was none to bid them act for him, and they speedily followed the first impulse which had been given them. Nero was carried to the camp; he made a suitable address, promised the expected donative, after his

was not intended to take speedy effect; the second must have been rapid indeed not to be rejected with the vomiting which immediately ensued. Suetonius gives other versions, all somewhat different, of the circumstances. *Claud.* 44. Comp. Dion, lx. 34.

<sup>1</sup> We may conclude from Tacitus that Claudius died soon after being carried from the supper table, about midnight of the 12th—13th; but his demise was announced as taking place some hours later, and the 13th was the day stated in the *Fasti*. Comp. Dion, lx. 34.; Suet. *Claud.* 45. Seneca (*Apocol.* 2.) pretends that he did not expire till after mid-day: "Inter sextam et septimam erat:"

"Jam medium curru Phœbus diviserat orbem,  
Et propior nocti fessas quatibat habenas."

Born Aug. 1. A. U. 744, Claudius died Oct. 13. A. U. 807, aged sixty-three years, two months, and twelve days. See Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* i. 36.

father's example, and was saluted imperator.<sup>1</sup> The senate accepted without hesitation the declared will of the prætorians; nor was there afterwards any dissent on the part of the legions in the provinces. The first act of the fathers was to decree the deification of Claudius, who was thus honourably dismissed, with the least possible delay, from the remembrance of the citizens to the pious services of his appointed Flamens. His funeral was ordered with great splendour, according to the precedent of Augustus, and the magnificence of Agrippina on the occasion was not inferior to that displayed formerly by Livia. But his will was never publicly recited; it was feared that the preference it gave to the adopted son over the actual would cause remark and dissatisfaction.<sup>2</sup>

We meet with more than one instance in the imperial history of the parents suffering for the sins of their children. We have already seen how much reason there is to believe that the hatred of the Romans to Tiberius disposed them readily to accept any calumny against Livia. Tiberius himself was hated the more for the crimes of his successor Caius; and there is ground to surmise that much of the odium which has attached to Claudius is reflected from the horror with which Nero came afterwards to be regarded. Thus did the Romans avenge themselves on the authors of the principle of hereditary succession so long unknown to their polity, and known at last so disadvantageously. Of Claudius, at least a feeling of compassion, if not of justice, may incline us to pronounce with more indulgence than has usually been accorded to him.<sup>3</sup> He was an imitator, as we have seen, of Augustus, but only

Estimate of  
the character  
of Claudius.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 8.; Tac. *Ann.* xii. 69.; Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xx. 8.: Dion (Xiphilin), lxi. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 45.; Tac. l. c.; Dion, lx. 35.

<sup>3</sup> Philostratus (in *Vit. Apoll.* v. 27.) judges more mildly of him: μετὰ γὰρ τὸν πρῶτον αὐτοκράτορα, ἢ οὐ τὰ Ῥωμαίων διεκοσμήθη, τυραννίδες οὕτω χαλεπαὶ ἐσχυσαν ἐπὶ πενήκοντα ἔτη ὥς μηδὲ Κλαύδιον τὰ μέγα τοῦτων τρωκάδεκα ἀρξάντα χρηστὸν δόξαι.

as the silver age might parody the golden; for the manners he sought to revive, and the sentiments he pretended to regenerate, had not been blighted by the passing tempest of civil war, but were naturally decaying from the over-ripeness of age. Nevertheless, it was honourable to admire a noble model; there was some generosity even in the attempt to rival the third founder of the state. Nor, in fact, does any period of Roman history exhibit more outward signs of vigorous and successful administration: none was more fertile in victories or produced more gallant commanders or excellent soldiers; domestic affairs were prosperously conducted; the laborious industry of the emperor himself tired out all his ministers and assistants. The senate recovered some portion of its authority, and, with authority, of courage and energy. Claudius secured respect for letters, in an age of show and sensuality, by his personal devotion to them. From some of the worst vices of his age and class he was remarkably exempt. His gluttony, if we must believe the stories told of it, was countenanced at least by many high examples; his cruelty, or rather his callous insensibility; was the result of the perverted training which made human suffering a sport to the master of a single slave, as well as to the emperor on the throne; and it was never aggravated at least by wanton caprice or ungovernable passion. The contempt which has been thrown on his character and understanding has been generated, in a great degree, by the systematic fabrications of which he has been made the victim. Though flattered with a lip-worship which seems to our notions incredible, Claudius appears to have risen personally above its intoxicating vapours; we know that, in one instance at least, the fulsome adulation of a man, the most remarkable of his age for eloquence and reputed wisdom, failed to turn the course whether of his justice or his anger.

The circumstances of this adulation, and of its disappointment, it is due to the memory of Claudius to detail.

We have no distinct account of the cause of Seneca's banishment, which is ascribed, by little better than a guess, to the machinations of Messalina against the friends and adherents of Julia.

Claudius honoured as a deity by Seneca during his lifetime.

However this may be, we have seen with what impatience the philosopher bore it. On the occasion of the death of a brother of Polybius, he addressed a treatise from his place of exile to the still powerful freedman, such as was styled a Consolation, in which he set forth all the arguments which wit and friendship could suggest to alleviate his affliction and fortify his wisdom. After assuring him of the solemn truth that all men are mortal, and reminding him that this world itself, and all that it contains, is subject to the common law of dissolution; that man is born to sorrow; that the dead can have no pleasure in his grief; that his grief at the best is futile and unprofitable; he diverts him with another topic which is meant to be still more effectual. The emperor, he says, is divine, and those who are blessed by employment in his service, and have him ever before their eyes, can retain no idle interest in human things; their happy souls neither fear nor sorrow can enter; the divinity is with them and around them.<sup>1</sup> *Me, he declares, this God has not overthrown; rather he has supported when others supplanted me; he still suffers me to remain for a monument of his providence and compassion. Whether my cause be really good or bad, his justice will at last pronounce it good, or his clemency will so regard it. Meanwhile, it is my comfort to behold his pardons travelling through the world: even from the corner where I am cast away his mercy has called forth many an exile before me. One day the eyes of his compassion will alight on me also. . . . Truly those thunderbolts are just which the thunderstricken have themselves learnt to adore. May the immortals long indulge him to the world! may he rival the deeds of Augustus and exceed his years! While still resident among us, may death never cross*

The consolation to Polybius.

<sup>1</sup> Senec. *Cens. ad Polyb.* 31.: "Non desinam toties tibi offerre Cæsarem."



*his threshold! Distant be the day, and reserved for the tears of our grand-children, when his divine progenitors demand him for the heavens which are his own!*<sup>1</sup>

Such were the phrases, sonorous and unctuously polished, which Polybius was doubtless expected to recite in the ears of the imperial pedant: standing high as he still did in the favour of Claudius and Messalina, he had the means, and was perhaps not without the will, to recommend them with all his interest, and intercede in the flatterer's behalf. Yet Claudius, it would seem, remained wholly unmoved by a worship more vehement than Ovid's, and enhanced still more by the unquestioned reputation of its author. Whatever had been the motives of his sentence against Seneca, it was not by flattery that he could be swayed to reverse it. Surely, as far as we are competent to judge, we must think the better both of his firmness and his sense.<sup>2</sup> Shortly afterwards Polybius was himself subverted by the caprice of Messalina; Messalina in her turn was overthrown by Agrippina; and it was not till the sister of Julia had gained the ascendant, that Seneca obtained at her instance the grace he had vainly solicited through the good offices of the freedman.

But however little Claudius may have relied on the sincerity of this brilliant phrasemonger, he could scarce have anticipated the revulsion of sentiment to which so ardent a worshipper would not blush to give utterance on his demise. It was natural of course that the returned exile should attach himself to his benefactress: from her hands he had received his honours; by her he was treated with a confidence which flattered him. No doubt he was among the foremost of the courtiers who de-

His adoration of Claudius proves unavailing.

Seneca's satire on the deification of Claudius.

<sup>1</sup> Senec. *Cons. ad Polyb.* 26, 31, 32.

<sup>2</sup> It should be remarked that we cannot speak with certainty of this presumed intercession of Polybius. It is possible that the *Consolation* did not reach him till he was no longer in a position to serve its author; but, on the other hand, there is no reason to suppose this to have been the case.

sented the setting to adore the rising luminary. Yet few perhaps, could believe that no sooner should Claudius be dead, ere yet the accents of official flattery had died away which proclaimed him entered upon the divine career of his ancestors; than the worshipper of the living emperor should turn his deification into ridicule, and blast his name with a slander of unparalleled ferocity. There is no more curious fragment of antiquity than the Vision of Judgment which Seneca has left us on the death and deification of Claudius. The traveller who has visited modern Rome in the autumn season has remarked the numbers of unwieldy and bloated gourds which sun their speckled bellies before the doors, to form a favourite condiment to the food of the poorer classes. When Claudius expired in the month of October, his soul, according to the satirist, long lodged in the inflated emptiness of his own swollen carcass, migrated by an easy transition into a kindred pumpkin. The senate declared that he had become a god; but Seneca knew that he was only transformed into a gourd. The senate decreed his divinity, Seneca translated it into pumkinity; and proceeded to give a burlesque account of what may be supposed to have happened in heaven on the appearance of the new aspirant to celestial honours.<sup>1</sup> A tall gray haired figure has arrived halting at the gates of Olympus: he mops and mows, and shakes his palsied head, and when asked whence he comes and what is his business, mutters an uncouth jargon in reply which none can understand. Jupiter sends Hercules to interrogate the

<sup>1</sup> The piece here alluded to is entitled in the MSS. and editions *Ludus de morte Claudii Caesaris*. Its style is very similar to that of Seneca, with whose works it has been found, and in brilliancy and point it is by no means unworthy of the great master of rhetoric. It contains, indeed, no allusion to the gourd or pumpkin; but Dion tells us (lx. 35.) that Seneca wrote a satire on the deification of Claudius to which he gave the name of *Apocolocyntosis* (or pumkinification), and there seems no ground to doubt the identity of the two pieces. It is not uncommon in ancient literature for the same work to be cited under two names. Thus the poem of Lucan is sometimes called *Pharsalia*, sometimes *de bello civili*.

creature, for Hercules is a travelled god, and knows many languages; but Hercules himself, bold and valiant as he is, shudders at the sight of a strange unearthly monster, with the hoarse inarticulate moanings of a seal or sea-calf. He fancied that he saw his thirteenth labour before him. Presently, on a nearer view, he discovers that it is *a sort of man*. Accordingly he takes courage to address him with a verse from Homer, the common interpreter of gods and men; and Claudius, rejoicing at the sound of Greek, and auguring that his own histories will be understood in heaven, replies with an apt quotation.<sup>1</sup> To pass over various incidents which are next related, and the gibes of the satirist on the Gaulish origin of Claudius, and his zeal in lavishing the franchise on Gauls and other barbarians, we find the gods assembled in conclave to deliberate on the pretensions of their unexpected visitor. Certain of the deities rise in their places, and express themselves with divers exquisite reasons in his favour; and his admission is about to be carried with acclamation, when Augustus starts to his feet (for the first time, as he calls them all to witness, since he became a god himself, for Augustus in heaven is reserved and silent, and keeps strictly to his own affairs); and recounts the crimes and horrors of his grandchild's career. He mentions the murder of his father-in-law Silanus, and his two sons-in-law Silanus and Pompeius, and the father-in-law of his daughter, and the mother-in-law of the same, of his wife Messalina, and of others more than can be named. The gods are struck with amazement and indignation. Claudius is repelled from the threshold of Olympus, and led by Mercury to the shades below. As he passes along the Via Sacra he witnesses the pageant of his own obsequies, and then first apprehends the fact of his decease. He hears the funeral dirge in which his actions are celebrated in most grandiloquent sing-song, descending at last to the abruptest

<sup>1</sup> Senec. *Apocol.* 5. :

τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν, πόθι ποῖ πτόλες; . . .

Ἰλιόθεν με φέρων ἀνεμὸς Κικόνεσσι πέλασσαν.

bathos.<sup>1</sup> But the satirist can strike a higher note: the advent of the ghost to the infernal regions is described with a sublime irony. *Claudius is come*, shout the spirits of the dead, and at once a vast multitude assemble around him, exclaiming, with the chant of the priests of Apis, *We have found him, we have found him; rejoice and be glad!*<sup>2</sup> Among them was Silius the consul and Junius the prætor, and Trallus and Trogus, and Cotta, Vettius, and Fabius, Roman knights, whom Narcissus had done to death. Then came the freedmen Polybius and Myron, Harpocras, Amphæus, and Pheronactes, whom Claudius had despatched to hell before him, that he might have his ministers below. Next advanced Catonius and Rufus, the prefects, and his friends Lusius and Pedito, and Lupus and Celer, consulars, and finally a number of his own kindred, his wife and cousins, and son-in-law. *Friends everywhere* simpered the fool; *pray how came you all here? How came we here?* thun-

<sup>1</sup> Senec. *Apocol.* 12.: "Ἰγνῆντι μεγαλῆγορίᾳ νῆνια cantabatur anapœstis; fundite fletus, edite planctus, fingite luctus," &c.

<sup>2</sup> Senec. *Apocol.* 13.: "Claudius Cæsar venit . . . εὐρηκαμεν, συγχαυρωμεν." Great has been the success of this remarkable passage, which may possibly have suggested the noble lines of Shakspeare, *Rich. III.* Act. i. sc. 4.:

Clarence is come, false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,  
That stabbed me in the field by Tewksbury.

It is more probable that Voltaire had it in his mind when he pronounced on the fate of Constantine and Clovis; and more than one stanza of Byron's *Vision of Judgment* is evidently suggested by it. Lucan also, in almost every page of whose poem I trace the study of his uncle Seneca, seems to have had it before him in those inspired lines, *Phars.* vi. in fin.:

"Tristis felicitibus umbris

Vultus erat: vidi Decios, natumque patremque,  
Lustrales bellis animas, fientemque Camillum  
Et Curios; Syllam de te, Fortuna, querentem . . . .  
Abruptis Catilina minax fractisque catenis  
Exsultant Mariique truces nudique Cethegi . . . ."

Corop. also Juvenal, ii. 153.:

"Curius quid sentit et ambo  
Scipiadae . . . . quoties hinc talis ad illos Umbra venit."

dered Pompeius Pedit : *who sent us here but thou, O murderer of all thy friends!*<sup>1</sup> And thereupon the new comer is hurried away before the judgment seat of Æacus. An old boon companion offers to plead for him; Æacus, most just of men, forbids, and condemns the criminal, one side only heard. *As he hath done*, he exclaims, *so shall he be done by.*<sup>2</sup> The shades are astounded at the novelty of the judgment: to Claudius it seems rather unjust than novel. Then the nature of his punishment is considered. Some would relieve Tantalus or Ixion from their torments and make the imperial culprit take their place; but no, that would still leave him the hope of being himself in the course of ages relieved. His pains must be never ending, still beginning: eternal trifler and bungler that he was, he shall play for ever and ever with a bottomless dicebox.<sup>3</sup>

Such was the scorn which might be flung upon the head of a national divinity, even though he were the adopted father of the ruler of the state; nor perhaps was the new and upstart deity much more cavalierly treated than might sometimes be the lot of the established denizens of Olympus. It is true that Nero at a later period thought fit to degrade his parent from these excessive honours, and even demolished the unfinished works of his temple on the Cælian hill:<sup>4</sup> but there is no reason to suppose that Seneca reserved his spite until this catastrophe, or that the prince evinced any marks of displeasure at the unrestrained laughter with which doubtless his satire was

Seneca's extravagant flattery of Nero.

<sup>1</sup> For Catonius, see Dion, lx. 18.; for Junius, Rufus, and Vettius, Tac. Ann. xi. 35. Pompeius Pedit seems to be the same who is there called Urbicus.

<sup>2</sup> Senec. l. c.:

Εἰ κε πάροιτά τ' ἔρεξε δίκη κ' ἰδέσθαι γένοιτο . . .

"Claudio iniquum magis videbatur quam novum."

<sup>3</sup> Senec. l. c. in fin.:

"Refugit digitosque per ipsos  
Fallax assiduo dilabitur alea furto."

<sup>4</sup> Suet. Claud. 45.; Vespas. 9.

greeted.<sup>1</sup> While the memory of the deceased emperor was thus ruthlessly torn in pieces, the writer had been careful to exalt in terms the most extravagant the anticipated glories of his successor; and the vain thoughtless heir perceived not that the mockery of his sire was the deepest of insults to himself. Of the figure, accomplishments, and character of Nero I shall speak more particularly hereafter: enough that he was young, that he was not ungraceful in appearance, that he had some talents, and, above all, the talent of exhibiting them. With such qualifications the new occupant of a throne could never want for flatterers. To sing them, the sage of the rugged countenance mounts gaily on the wings of poetry, and sports in strains of mellifluous mellow-ness, such as might grace the erotic lyre of the most callow votary of the Muses. At last, he says, in mercy to his wretchedness, the life-thread of the stolid Claudius had been severed by the fatal shears. But Lachesis, at that moment, had taken in her hands another skein of dazzling whiteness, and as it glided nimbly through her fingers, the common wool of life was changed into a precious tissue: "—a golden age untwined from the spindle. The Sisters ply their work in gladness, and glory in their blessed task; and far, far away stretches the glittering thread, beyond the years of Nestor and Tithonus. Phœbus stands by their side, and sings to them as they spin,—Phœbus the God of song and the God of prophecy. *Stay not, O stay not, gentle sisters; he shall transcend the limits of human life; he shall be like me in face, like me in beauty; neither in song nor in eloquence behind me. He shall restore a blissful age to wearied men, and break again the long silence of the Laws.*

<sup>1</sup> Nero is said to have called mushrooms *the food of Gods*, θεῶν βρώμα. Suet. *Ner.* 3. The jest of Gallio, Seneca's brother, that Claudius was dragged to heaven by a hangman's hook, is conceived in a similar spirit of inhuman banter. Dion, ix. 35. Juvenal's phrase, "Tremulumque caput descendere jussit In cœlum" (vi. 628.), is equally happy, and for once less coarse than either.

<sup>2</sup> Senec. *Apocol.* 4.: "Mutatur vilis pretioso lana metallo."

*Yes,—as when Lucifer drives the stars before him, and morning dissipates the clouds, the bright sun gazes on the world, and starts his chariot on its daily race,—so Cæsar breaks upon the earth; such is the Nero whom Rome now beholds;—beams his bright countenance with tempered rays, and glistens his fair neck beneath its floating curls.<sup>1</sup>*

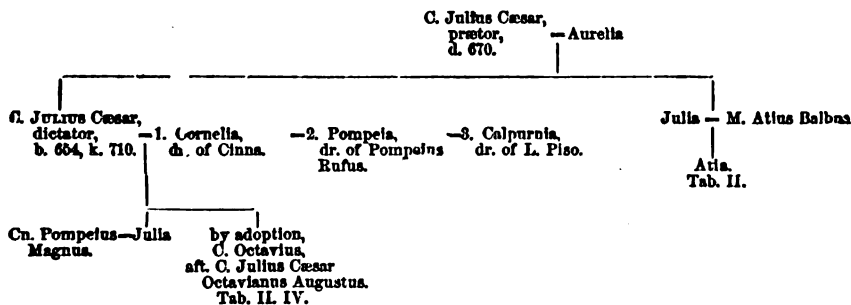
Senec. l. c.:

“Ille mihi similis vultu, similisque decore,  
Nec cantu nec voce minor; felicia lassis  
Sæcula præstabit, legumque silentia rumpet . .  
Talis Cæsar adest; talem jam Roma Neronem  
Aspiciat: flagrat nitidus fulgore remisso  
Vultus, et effuso cervix formosa capillo.”

# APPENDIX TO CHAPTER I.

## GENEALOGICAL TABLES.

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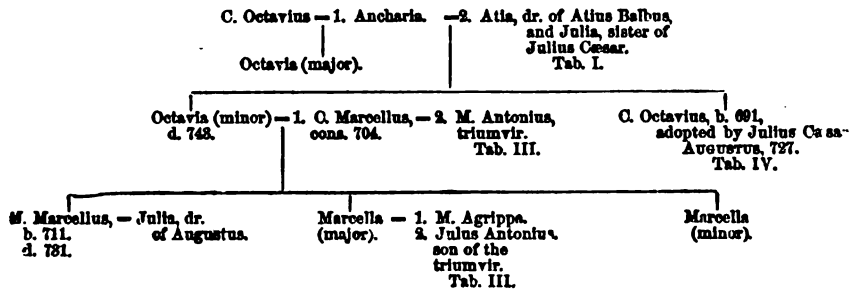




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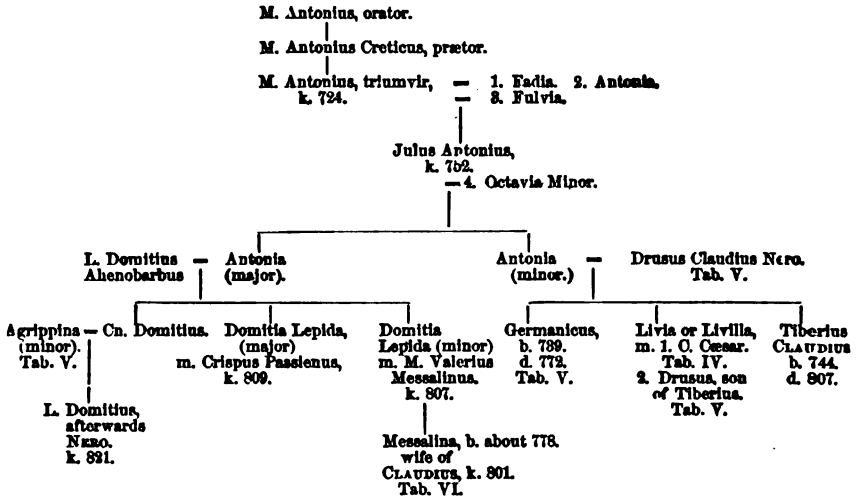


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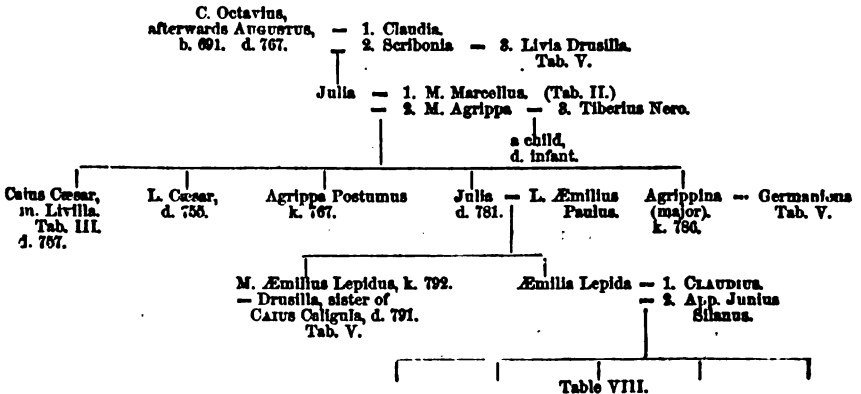


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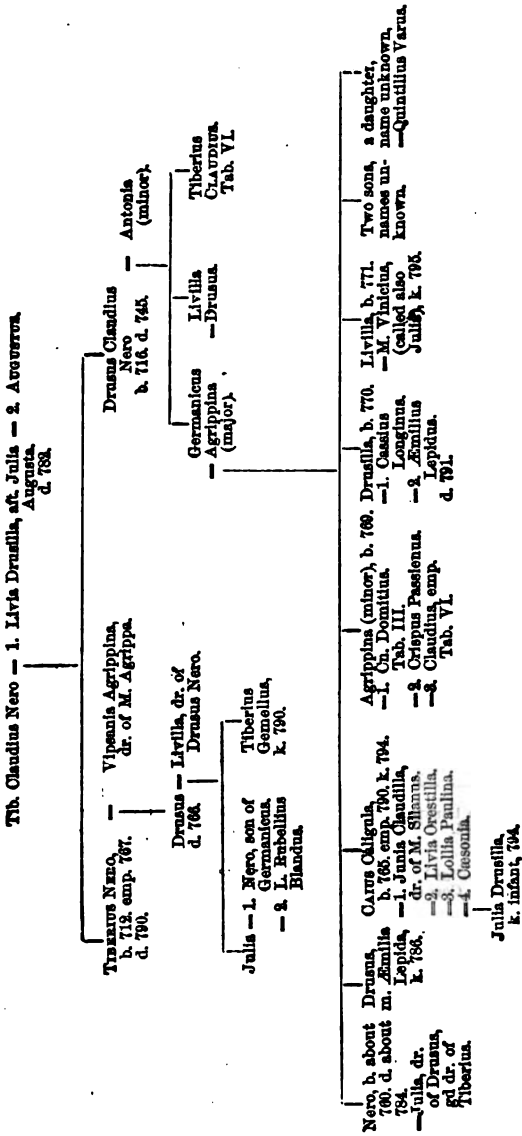


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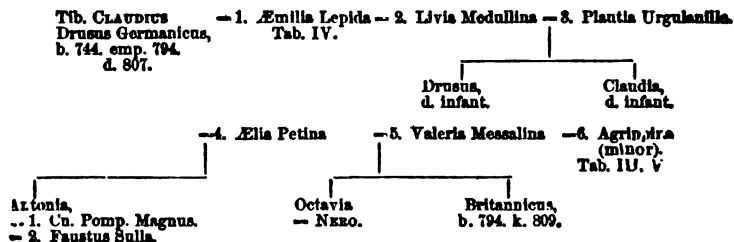
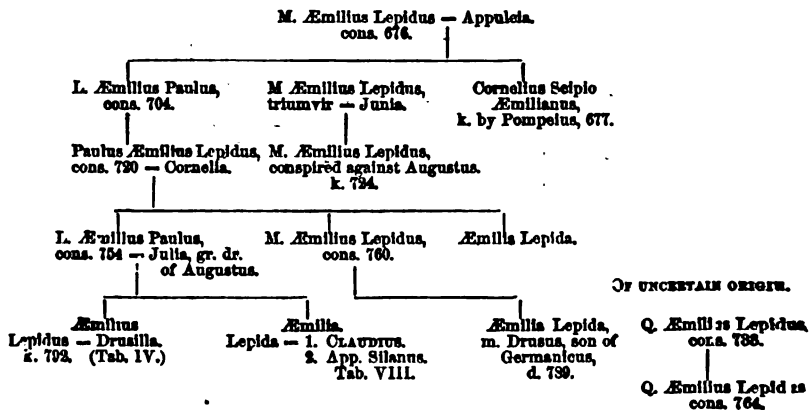


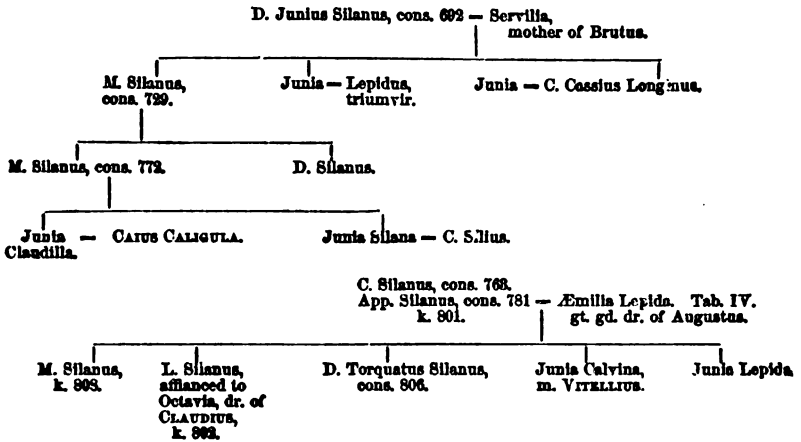
TABLE VII.

(From Smith's Classical Biography.)



## TABLE VIII.

(From Smith's Classical Biography.)



END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.



1880.

# PALESTINE

in the  
FIRST CENTURY.



HISTORY  
OF  
THE ROMANS  
UNDER THE EMPIRE.

BY  
CHARLES MERIVALE, B. D.,  
LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

FROM THE FOURTH LONDON EDITION.

*WITH A COPIOUS ANALYTICAL INDEX.*

VOL. VI.

NEW YORK:  
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,  
1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.  
1880.





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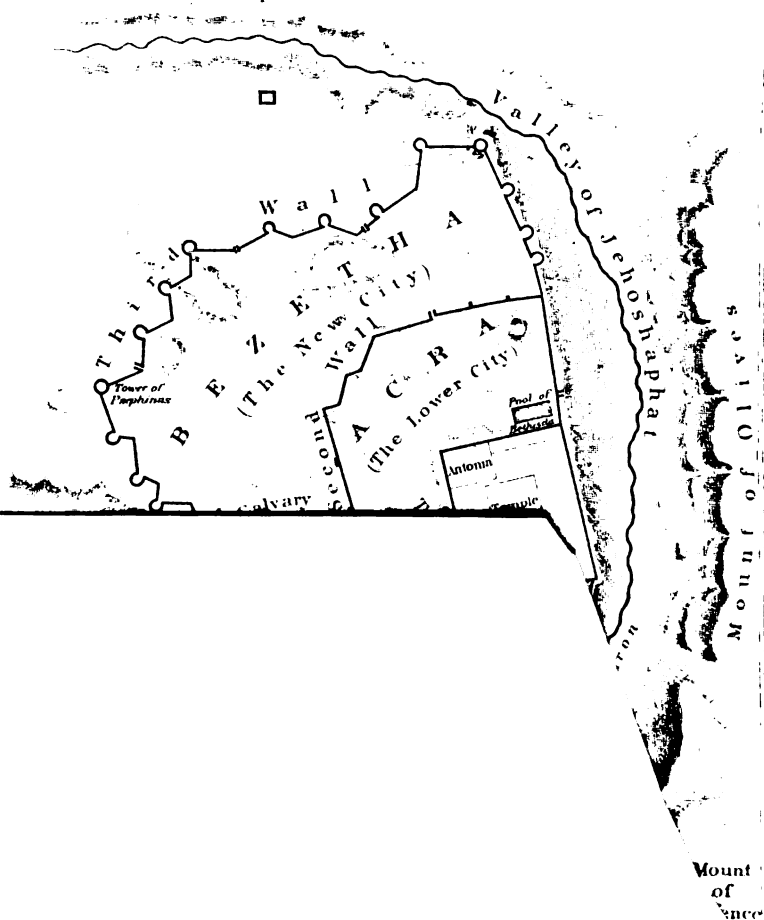
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**was crowned everywhere with solid success: while in this island his own exploits, no less than those of his lieutenants,**

Scopus



# HISTORY OF THE ROMANS

## *UNDER THE EMPIRE.*



### CHAPTER LI.

THE WISE AND LIBERAL POLICY OF CLAUDIUS TOWARDS GAUL.—HIS MEASURES FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF DRUIDISM.—HE GIVES A KING TO THE CHERUSCANS AND WITHDRAWS THE ROMAN ARMIES FROM GERMANY.—POLITICAL STATE OF BRITAIN.—INVADED BY AULUS PLAUTIUS (A. U. 796. A. D. 43.).—ARRIVAL OF CLAUDIUS.—DEFEAT OF THE TRINOBANTES.—FURTHER SUCCESSSES OF PLAUTIUS AND VESPASIAN.—SUBJUGATION OF SOUTHERN BRITAIN.—CAMPAIGNS OF OSTERIUS SCAPULA AGAINST CARACTACUS AND THE SILURES.—FOUNDATION OF THE COLONIA CAMULODUNUM (A. U. 804. A. D. 51.).—FINAL DEFEAT AND CAPTURE OF CARACTACUS.—MAGNANIMITY OF CLAUDIUS.—ACCOUNT OF THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF BRITAIN, AND THE STATIONS OF THE LEGIONS.—SUTONIUS PAULLINUS ROUTS THE BRITONS IN ANGLESEY.—INSURRECTION OF THE ICENI UNDER THEIR QUEEN BOADICEA.—CAMULODUNUM STORMED AND DESTROYED.—SLAUGHTER OF THE ROMANS AND OVERTHROW OF THEIR ESTABLISHMENTS.—RETURN OF SUTONIUS FROM ANGLESEY, AND DEFEAT OF THE ICENI (A. U. 814. A. D. 61.).—FINAL PACIFICATION OF SOUTHERN BRITAIN.

**B**EFORE comparing with the event the presage of our sanguine philosopher, we will briefly dwell on that episode in the history of Claudius, which is to English readers the most interesting in his reign, the invasion and conquest of southern Britain. If this emperor's disposition was cautious rather than enterprising, his military policy was crowned everywhere with solid success: while in this island his own exploits, no less than those of his lieutenants,



were bold and brilliant, and reflect lustre on his administration from the remotest corner of the Roman world.

Claudius, indeed, whenever he directly copied the example of Augustus, approached nearest to the character of a dis-  
Claudius by  
birth a Gaul.
creet and able sovereign. When he placed him-  
 self, as it were, in the capital of Gaul, and traced  
 from that centre the lines of his policy on the frontiers, he  
 best fulfilled the prescriptive functions which every Roman  
 attached to the idea of the Emperor. Born at Lugdunum,  
 on the day when the divinity of Augustus was proclaimed  
 officially in the province, the child of the conqueror of the  
 Germans and the chief and patron of the Gauls, Claudius  
 might himself deserve the appellation of Gaul almost as much  
 as of Roman.<sup>1</sup> It was on this, his native soil, that he ever  
 felt himself strongest. Gaul was the standing-point whence  
 he loved to survey the empire; whence he derived his happi-  
 est inspirations; whence he directed his most successful meas-  
 ures, pacific or military. It was from the colony of Lugdunum  
 that he extended his views to the incorporation of the Gaulish  
 with the Roman people; from Lugdunum that he cast his  
 mental vision across the Rhine on the one hand and the  
 British Channel on the other, and resolved to secure both  
 these frontiers of the empire by vigorous aggressions upon  
 the regions beyond them. The Cock, or Gaul, says Seneca,  
 using a play on words which eighteen centuries have rendered  
 venerable, was bravest on his own dunghill.<sup>2</sup> But this jest,  
 intended as a bitter sarcasm, expressed a sober truth. What-  
 ever were his personal failings, the character of Claudius as  
 a Roman emperor, representing the principle of civilization  
 by conquest, is redeemed by the bold and intelligent spirit  
 of his Gaulish policy.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 2.: "Lugduni, eo ipso die quo primum ara ibi Augusto dedi-  
 cata est."

<sup>2</sup> Senec. *Apocol.* 7.: "Gallum in suo sterquilinio plurimum posse." The  
 proverb seems to have been ancient even in the time of Seneca. But the sat-  
 irist identifies him still further with the land of his nativity: "As might be  
 expected of a Gaul," he says, "Claudius spoiled Rome."

We have already remarked the liberal measures which Claudius adopted for gradually amalgamating the nations beyond the Alps with their southern conquerors. On a people so impulsive as the Gauls, these measures exercised, no doubt, a soothing influence, while they moulded their habits in the prescribed direction. The men who were proud to fight under one Cæsar, were assuredly not less pleased with admission to the senate by another. It would be gratifying, indeed, could we feel warranted in accepting as a sober truth the sneer of Seneca, that Claudius really meant to extend his boon of citizenship to other nations besides the Gauls; that he proposed to be the patron of the Germans, the Britons, the Iberians, and the Africans: we should rejoice to have solid ground for ascribing to him a broad and general view for the reformation of the Roman polity, the extinction of the Italian municipium in the empire of the world, rather than a mere act of bounty towards a single favoured people. But of this we have no distinct evidence. All we can say with certainty is that he threw open the gates of Rome to the inhabitants of Gaul, and applied the principles of the first Cæsar with the frankness not unworthy of that bold emancipator. If it were not the first step taken by the emperors in that happy direction, neither, it was evident, could it be the last.

Claudius, however, it may be affirmed with certainty, had a special motive besides personal partiality for this favour to the Gauls. No people within the circuit of Roman dominion more required at this moment to be conciliated; none held within its bosom such dangerous elements of disaffection. Under Tiberius a serious revolt had been quelled by a statesman's firm resolution. Under Caius the germ of a civil war had been extinguished, as it appears, by the happy boldness of a madman. But whenever disturbances should again arise, whether from discontent among the natives, or from the irregular ambition of a Roman official, there existed in the deep-rooted influence of the Druids, and the wide ramifica-

His liberal policy towards the Gauls.

Disquiet and suspicion with which the Romans regarded Druidism.

tions of their system, still alive though proscribed and persecuted, the seeds of a violent outbreak of Celtic nationality. With the scanty knowledge we possess of the real character and history of Druidism, we have no means of testing the vague notions entertained by the Romans themselves of the extent to which its authority prevailed. If indeed we may believe their representations, this singular form of priestcraft was recognised at this period throughout wider regions than perhaps any other creed of Paganism. Its centre was in the north of Gaul, at Dreux, or Chartres, or Autun; but its most illustrious fanes were to be sought on the coasts of Brittany, in the sacred islands off the mouth of the Loire; in the temples of Stonehenge or Abury in our own country; in the Isle of Anglesey and possibly also of Man.<sup>1</sup> From the shores of the Gulf of Lyons to the Firth of Clyde a common system of usage and ceremonial attested the identity of the Druidism of the Gauls and Britons. It was among the Britons, indeed, as we are told, that the system was taught in its greatest purity; and such was the facility of communication between the two great members of the Celtic family, that the youth of Gaul constantly crossed the Channel to seek the highest instruction in its tenets. In Gaul the Roman ruler sought to modify and control this dangerous antagonist by assuring the natives that their religion was merely another form of the Greek and Italian polytheism:<sup>2</sup> to them Druidism was officially declared to be a special modification of truths

<sup>1</sup> The silence of the Roman authorities on Stonehenge and the other presumed Druidical monuments of Britain is no doubt remarkable; yet it seems extravagant to suppose, with some modern theorists, that they are posterior to the Roman period. They are first referred to by Henry of Huntingdon, early in the twelfth century, as then of unfathomed antiquity, and they form, unquestionably, part of a common system of monumental structures, scattered from Carnac in Brittany through a great part of northern and central Europe.

<sup>2</sup> Lucan, i. 450. :—

“ Et vos barbaricos ritus moremque sinistram  
 Sacrorum, Druidæ, positis repetitis ab armis  
 Solis nosse Deos et cæli numina vobis,  
 Aut solis nescire datum est ”

common to the wisest and most advanced nations of antiquity. But the fear with which he really regarded it, as an implacable enemy, an inspired rival, was betrayed by the dark colours he allowed to be thrown over it at home. The bondage in which it kept the minds of its devotees, the atrocity of its human sacrifices, the daring falsehood of its promise of immortality, were exposed to the disgust and contempt of the votaries of Olympus. Its rites were barbarous; its ceremonies were sinister and gloomy. The priests alone, it was averred, pretended in their pride to the occult science which apprehends, or rather misapprehends, the Gods.<sup>1</sup> The horrors of the sacred groves, on which no birds alighted, in which no breezes rustled, their scarred and leafless trunks, their bloody altar stumps, the dripping of their black fountains, the mutterings of their riven caves, the ghastly visages of their shapeless idols, were enhanced with all the art of poetic colouring, and contrasted with the graceful forms of Nymphs and Dryads in their fair retreats, with the frank and cheerful character of the southern religions, the faith of innocence, mirth, and trust. Amidst the importunate doubts and fears regarding the future, or rather in the despair of another life which Paganism now generally acknowledged, the Roman was exasperated at the Druid's assertion of the transmigration of souls. *Yet happy, he exclaimed in the bitterness of his spirit, were the Gauls and Britons in their error, insensible as it made them to the greatest of all fears, the fear of death: in this faith they rushed gaily and reck-*

<sup>1</sup> Lucan, iii. 399. :—

"Lucus erat longo nunquam violatus ab ævo . . . . .  
 Hunc non ruricolæ Panes, nemorumque potentes  
 Sylvani Nymphæque tenent: sed barbara ritu  
 Sacra deum, structæ sacris feralibus ara,  
 Omnis et humanis lustrata oruoribus arbos . . . . .  
 Illis et volucres metuunt insistere ramis  
 Et lustris recubare feræ; nec ventus in illas  
 Incubuit sylvas . . . . . Tum plurima nigris  
 Fontibus unda cadit . . . . . Jam fama ferebat  
 Sæpe cavas motu terræ mugire cavernas . . . . ."

*lessly on the sword ; their generous souls disdaining to spare the life that would so soon revive.*<sup>1</sup>

Augustus, at the same time that he offered his own divinity as an object of worship to the Gauls at Lugdunum, had forbidden the exercise of Druidical rites in Rome. Henceforth the fierce and gloomy superstition of the North was branded as impious and immoral, hurtful to the manners of the citizens who might be tempted to mingle in it, and even to the public safety. But Augustus had not ventured to prohibit the natives of the transalpine provinces from using their ancient rites on their own soil. Tiberius seems to have pressed on the hostile system with a still stronger hand : the revolt of the Æduans and of Sacrovir, who, as we have seen, was probably himself a Druid, may have exasperated his enmity.<sup>2</sup> It was reserved, however, for Claudius to decree its entire abolition, and to enforce with severity the edict of proscription. Of the measures, indeed, which he took, and the details of his persecution, we have no information : a single anecdote preserved by Pliny seems to show that, in Rome, at least it was searching and sanguinary. A Gaulish chief, he tells us, a Vocontian of the Narbonensis, who had obtained Roman knighthood, was delivered to the executioner because on his coming to Rome on private business, the Druid's talisman called the serpent's egg was discovered upon his person.<sup>3</sup> The jealousy

<sup>1</sup> Lucan, i. 460. :—

“ Felices errore suo quos ille timor  
 Maximus haud urget æti metus : inde ruendi  
 In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces  
 Mortis, et ignavum reditura parcere vita.”

<sup>2</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxx. 4. : “ Tiberii Cæsaris principatus sustulit Druidas, et hoc genus vatium medicorumque.” Some have supposed that Pliny has made a mistake, or that he means Tiberius Claudius : it seems more likely that he refers to a partial proscription of Druidism by the successor of Augustus. Strabo (iv. 4. p. 198.) had spoken under the second principate of the diligence of the Romans in abolishing the worst atrocities of the Celtic cults.

<sup>3</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxix. 3. The serpent's egg (ovum anguinum) seems to have been an echinite or other fossil substance, to which the Druids ascribed a

of the government and the curious interest of the people, were most excited, perhaps, by the magical powers claimed by the priests of Gaul, and the prophetic pretensions of its bards.

While these harsh measures for crushing the national spirit of the Gauls, and extirpating their leaders, were in course of execution, the Roman government was not less anxious to advance the eagles beyond their frontiers, and to remove from their borders the dangerous spectacle of freedom. On the side of Germany, indeed, the dominion of the conquerors had long been prepared by artifice more sure than arms. After the execution of Gætulicus, the legions, which he had debauched, had been exercised by his successor, Galba, in some desultory operations against the Chatti; but generally the peace of the frontiers had been preserved, while the Germans were rapidly assimilating themselves to the manners of their more powerful and civilized neighbours. Since the death of Arminius, the Cherusicans, once so formidable, had been greatly enfeebled by internal anarchy. At length, unable to govern themselves, they solicited a chief from the emperor. The son of Flavius, the brother of Arminius, had been educated at Rome, in the civilization of the South, with a view, no doubt, to future service. The Cherusicans were willing to accept a kinsman of their late hero: Claudius seized the opportunity for advancing his own views; and the youth went forth from the school of monarchy, the first foreigner, as the emperor reminded him, who, born at Rome, a citizen and not a captive or a hostage, had been raised by Roman hands to an independent sovereignty. Italicus, such was the name the German adopted, had been trained to the skilful use both of the Roman and the German weapons; beneath the varnish of Italian cultivation he retained some also of the coarse tastes of his ancient countrymen; and he seems to have possessed popular manners, which for a time ingratiated him with the jealous barbarians. But presently offence was mysterious origin, and not less mysterious virtues. It was worn round the neck as an amulet.

Claudius gives  
a king to the  
Cherusicans.

given; suspicions and enmities arose; the charge of Roman manners was promptly made against him, and connected with the imputation of foreign inclinations, and a disposition to sacrifice to the stranger the weal of the fatherland. It was in vain, urged his enemies, that he boasted himself the nephew of Arminius the patriot: was he not the son of Flavius the renegade? Italicus, on the other hand, reminded the disaffected that he had come among them at their own invitation, and challenged his enemies to decide by arms whether he deserved by his prowess to claim kinship with their bravest champion. He succeeded, after some vicissitudes, in putting down the open attempts to unseat him; but the Cherusicans continued, under his rule, to be disturbed by dissensions, to the advantage of the Romans, who looked on complacently, and abstained from interfering.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Chauci, who had formed a closer connexion with Rome, and had profited for many years by their

Campaign of  
Corbulo in Ger-  
many.

state of peaceful dependence, which gave an opening to their commerce with Gaul and Britain, had ventured, at the instigation of a piratical chief named Gennascus, to seek plunder by incursions into the lower German province. Sanquinius, the commander in this quarter, had recently died, and the defence of the district was for a time neglected. This man was succeeded, however, by Domitius Corbulo, an active and enterprising soldier, who promptly restored discipline in the camps, repaired the flotilla of the Rhine and ocean, and pursued the depredators into all their harbours. He chastised the Frisii, who had dared to withhold their stipulated tribute; and without actually annexing their country to the Roman dominions, planted among them a government of the friends and clients of the empire, supported by the presence of a military force. At the same time he sought to subdue the Chauci by corrupting some of their chiefs, and by the murder of Gennascus, towards whom, as a mere pirate, no terms of honour need be kept. This attempt on the outlaw's life was

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 16, 17.

indeed successful; nevertheless, the result was not so propitious as Corbulo had anticipated. The Chauci, long wavering in their dependence, were decided A. D. 47.  
A. U. 800. against Rome by irritation at this treacherous dealing, and flew to arms with frantic ardour. Possibly this was what Corbulo desired; he had scattered with his own hand the seed of rebellion, the crop had ripened, and he was about to reap the harvest. But he had worse enemies at the court of Claudius than the Chauci on the Rhine. He was there represented as seeking war for his own aggrandizement. If he failed, the empire would suffer; if he triumphed, the emperor himself might find him dangerous. Such were the insinuations, it was alleged, by which the timid prince was induced to stop the progress of conquest in Germany, and recall his standards behind the Rhine. But Claudius doubtless knew that peace was now a more effective auxiliary than war; and he preferred holding out the hand of treacherous friendship to engaging in superfluous hostilities. The order to retire reached Corbulo when he was actually planting a camp in the territory of the Chauci for the site of a fortress, or a colony. He read in it the danger to which he was exposed from the emperor's jealousy: the contempt in which he should be held by the arrogant barbarians, the mockery to which he should be subjected even from his own allies. Nevertheless, with the old Roman endurance, he stifled every sign of anger or murmur of remonstrance; and muttering only, *how fortunate were once the Roman captains*, gave the signal for retreat. With the withdrawal of the legions, the Chauci relapsed into their fatal torpor. It was necessary, however, to furnish the soldiers with employment; and, forbidden to exercise them in war, Corbulo now engaged them in a great work of engineering, which has long outlasted the conquests of Rome beyond the Rhine. He cut a canal from the Maas, near its mouth, to the northern branch of the Rhine parallel to the line of coast, to effect an easy communication between his stations, in a region where the yielding soil could scarce bear the weight of a military causeway, to drain at the same



time the lowlands, and oppose dykes to the encroachment of the ocean.<sup>1</sup> Before the adoption of the modern railroad, the canal of Corbulo was the common highway of traffic between Rotterdam and Leyden; and its plodding trekschuyt may still faithfully represent the old Roman tow-boat of the Pomptine marshes.<sup>2</sup>

The religion of the Germans was distinct from that of the Gauls; and from this reason, perhaps, as well as from the long animosity between the two nations, the Romans were less apprehensive of the effect which might be produced on the one bank by the view of surviving independence on the other. But with the island of Britain, more distant yet not remote, the case was different. Though the Channel was a broader barrier than the Rhine, the communication of ideas, of hopes, fears and enmities, was more close and constant between the Gauls and Britons than between the Gauls and Germans. There was nearer affinity in blood, language and manners; there were no recollections of mutual hostility; no memorials on either side of conquest or encroachment; above all, Druidism was paramount among both, and the ministers of the Gallic rites looked to the sacred recesses of the northern island as the real hearth and home of their own religious polity. The persecution of the Druids on the continent drove them back to the spot where they had imbibed their own mystic lore; and the recital of their wrongs inflamed the indignation of

The Romans more jealous of freedom in Britain than in Germany.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xi. 18-20. "This great work still forms a principal drain of the province of Holland between the city of Leyden and the village of Sluys on the Maas."—Greenwood, *Hist. of the Germans*, i. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Horace's *Journey to Brundisium*. A more important work of this kind was projected about the year 812 by L. Vetus, a Roman commander in northern Gaul. He proposed to unite the Saone and Moselle by a canal, to expedite the transmission of troops from the South; but was dissuaded from the enterprise by Ælius Gracilis, the legatus of the Belgic province, as likely to bring him into suspicion with the emperor. Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 53. Steininger (*Geoch. der Trevirer*, p. 86.) laments, that up to this day so useful a work should have been neglected, though it presents no great difficulties.

the children of that heroic race which could boast that it had repulsed the mighty Cæsar with ignominy from its shores.<sup>1</sup>

The tribute which Julius Cæsar had pretended to impose on some chiefs of southern Britain had been rarely offered, and never exacted. Augustus, we have seen, had once threatened to recover it in person by force of arms: it is possible that some slight con-

Relation of  
Britain with  
the continent.

cessions then made to his demands sufficed to divert him from an enterprise he had no real desire to undertake.<sup>2</sup> Under Tiberius, the affairs of Britain excited no political interest at Rome. But the rapid progress of Roman civilization in northern Gaul, the growth of the cities on the banks of the teeming Rhine-stream, the spread of commercial relations along the shores of Belgium, Holland, and Friesland, had elicited a spirit of friendly intercourse from the British side of the ocean. Londinium, a city which escaped the notice of Cæsar, had become in the time of Claudius a great emporium of trade. Camulodunum was the residence of the chief potentate of southern Britain; the fertile plains of our eastern provinces were studded with numerous towns and villages; the vessels of the Thames, the Colne, and the Wensum reciprocated traffic with those of the Rhine, the Maas, and the Scheldt: the coinage of Cunobelinus, king of the Trinobantes, of which specimens still exist, attests, by its skilful workmanship and its Latin legends, an intimate

<sup>1</sup> Names, indeed, of Gaulish tribes, and those possibly of German origin, may be noticed in the south-eastern parts of Britain, but there is no record of a hostile invasion, no allusion to hostile reminiscences; and the existence of Druidical remains on the very spots where these tribes were seated speaks in favour of their actual affinity to the original stock.

<sup>2</sup> My attention has been directed to a fragment of Livy recently produced by Schneidewin, from which it would appear that Augustus actually set foot in Britain: "Cæsar Augustus populo Romano nuntiat, regressus a Britannia insula, totum orbem terrarum tam bello quam amicitia Romano imperio subditum." The passage seems to be a fragment of an epitome, and is probably not strictly faithful to the sense of the author. See *The Christian Reformer* for Jan. 1857, p. 7. Suetonius (*Claud.* 16.) and Eutropius (vii. 13.) say expressly that no Roman set foot in Britain from Julius Cæsar to Claudius.

and friendly connexion between Britain and Gaul, or possibly Italy.<sup>1</sup> We may conjecture, that the Romans themselves, in the interval since the invasion of Cæsar, had settled as traders on our island.

The south-eastern parts of Britain seem to have been occupied at this period by three principal nations, the Regni in Sussex, the Trinobantes in Hertford and Essex, the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk. The Trinobantes were already known as the most powerful of the British tribes in the time of Cæsar.

Chief States  
of Southern  
Britain; the  
Trinobantes,  
the Regni, and  
the Iceni.

Their leader, Cassivellaunus, had assumed the direction of a league against the invader. His authority had been still further extended by his successors. If we may believe that the great system of roads, to which we give the name of British, was actually the work of our Celtic ancestors, extending as they do across the length and breadth of the island from Richborough to the Menai Straits, from the mouth of the Axe to the Wash and Humber, it would seem to indicate that there was once a time when the whole of South Britain at least was subject to some common authority. Of such a political combination, however, there is certainly no trace in history: possibly the union extended only to matters of religion.<sup>2</sup> Cunobelinus indeed, the greatest of

<sup>1</sup> In the time of Cæsar, according to his own account, the Britons had no coinage, and used only rude pieces of iron by weight. Eckhel expresses some doubt of the genuineness of the few British coins which were known in his day. Their number, however, has now been greatly increased, and modern numismatists have assiduously collected and catalogued them. I am informed that they are generally rather coarse imitations of Macedonian types, derived, no doubt, from Gaul and Massilia.

<sup>2</sup> Cæsar describes the Britons as in a state of barbarism, which completely disappears in the accounts of Tacitus and Dion. We hear no more now of their painted bodies, their scythed chariots, their hideous sacrifices, their revolting concubinage. Can we suppose that Cæsar was willing to represent the country, which he found it inconvenient to subdue, as more miserable than it really was? Or could the hundred years of intercourse, which had since intervened, with the pacified tribes of Gaul and Germany, have effected so remarkable a change? The existence of a common system of roads throughout the country, which is admitted by some of the best modern antiquarians, seems a

the descendants of Cassivellaunus, seems to have united a large part of the island under his control or influence. From his capital at Camulodunum, near the mouth of the Colne in Essex, to which he had transferred the royal residence from Verulamium, for the advantage perhaps of intercourse with Gaul and Germany, he extended his sway over the south and centre of Britain, and may possibly have been recognised as paramount in arms by the pure Celtic races on the Severn and even beyond it. The people of Kent and Sussex may also, in some sense, have acknowledged his sovereignty. But the Iceni were independent, jealous, and perhaps hostile to him. To this nation also a number of petty tribes were subservient, extending across the centre of the island from the Wash to the Avon and Severn. Between the Romans and these proud and self-confident islanders, causes of quarrel were never wanting; it only remained for the southern conquerors hovering on their coasts, and mingling in all their dealings, to choose their own moment for aggression. The petty chiefs who chanced to be expelled from their own country by domestic dissensions, generally sought a refuge, which was never denied them, within the Roman dominions, and the kings of the Trinobantes or Iceni sometimes ventured to demand that they should be surrendered. On the other hand, the fugitives were constantly urging the Roman government to restore them by arms or influence to their forfeited rights at home, and holding out splendid promises of tribute and submission in return. Between these two classes of applicants the Romans would not long hesitate. When Adminius, one of the sons of Cunobelin, solicited Caius to recover for him his share in the paternal inheritance, the

strong proof of a common civilization. These lines of road do not correspond with the Roman Itineraries; and some of them, as those which lead from Seaton to Yarmouth, and from Southampton to Richborough, do not seem to belong to a Roman system. They point to a native traffic, carried on by land and water, between Armorica and the Frisian or Danish coasts. But if not Roman, there is no later period of an united Britain to which they can well be ascribed.

emperor prepared, as we have seen, to enforce his claims with a military demonstration. The threatened invasion was, however, postponed, whether its ostensible object were gained or not. Of Adminius and his pretensions we hear no more; but other fugitives and other claimants soon appeared upon the scene.

The solicitations of Bericus to Claudius were the counterpart to those of Adminius to his predecessor, though of this suppliant we know even less than of the former.

Claudius prepares for the invasion of Britain.

But he too was a chief expatriated by domestic enemies, he too was demanded in extradition by his countrymen, but retained by the policy rather than the compassion of the Romans; he too succeeded in getting a Roman army equipped for his restoration.<sup>1</sup> Claudius could assert, like Augustus before him, that the tribute of Britain had been long withheld. Like Augustus, he was determined to chastise the defaulters, and take firmer sureties than before for future submission. Like Augustus, he proposed to lead the eagles in person, to earn a title and a triumph, as his ancestors had done, on the field of battle. But he could not spare the time, he would not perhaps encounter the toil, required for the conquest of the powerful islanders. Aulus Plautius, who held a high command in Gaul, was chosen to conduct the invasion, and prepare the way for the emperor

A. D. 43.  
A. U. 796.

by a preliminary campaign in the year of the city 796. It was now about a hundred years since the epoch of Cæsar's first descent on Britain. The futile and almost ignominious result of that attempt was still remembered among the legions of the northern provinces. The storms and shoals of the ocean had since then caused more than one disaster to their arms. The inhospitable character of the natives of either coast had more than once been proved,<sup>2</sup> and when Plautius announced to his soldiers

<sup>1</sup> Dion, ix. 19. This Bericus may probably have been the Veric of some British coins.

<sup>2</sup> Hor. *Od.* iii. 3.: "Visam Britannos hospitibus feros." Yet the British chiefs had sent back the shipwrecked sailors of Germanicus (*Tac. Ann.* ii. 24.).

the service they were destined for, they refused to follow his standards, and broke out into murmurs and even mutiny. Plantius reported the condition of his camp to Rome. The emperor, bent on his purpose, determined to enforce discipline. He sent Narcissus to the camp, to bring the turbulent legionaries to obedience. They received him with cries of *Io Saturnalia!* mocking the arrogant freedman as a slave who ventured to assume the character of his master. But, satisfied with their jest, they seem to have returned at last of their own accord to their duty, and submitted to their chief's commands.

Four legions, the Second, the Ninth, the Fourteenth and the Twentieth, all noted afterwards in British history, were selected for this distant adventure. Plantius, we are told, arrayed his forces in three divisions, to which he assigned different places of landing, in order to baffle the defence, and secure a footing in one quarter, if repulsed in another. I shall have occasion to show how little reliance can be placed on the details of this expedition, meagre as they are, recorded by Dion only; we have, however, no choice but to relate them as they have been reported, and point out their inconsistency as we proceed. The ships encountered adverse weather, and were more than once driven back; but the appearance of a meteor which shot from East to West, restored the courage of the soldiers, by following the direction in which they were bound. It would seem then that their course lay from the Belgian roadsteads on either side the Itian promontory, to the British above and below the South Foreland; from the ship-builders' creeks at the efflux of the Aa and the Liane to the havens or low accessible beaches of Richborough, Dover and Lymne. Whatever were the points at which they came to land, they seem to have encountered no resistance. Soon afterwards we shall find the Regni in friendly relations with the Romans, and it is possible that the invaders had already tampered with their

Aulus Plantius  
Invades Britain

These men, however, brought home a terrific account of the sea and land monsters they had encountered. Moreover, the poverty of the unclad islanders was still remembered in the traditions of the camps.

fidelity to the common cause, and engaged their influence over the coast of Kent and Sussex. It was reported, however, that the natives had been lulled into false security by the rumours sedulously wafted from Gaul of the disaffection of the legions, and neglected in consequence the measures necessary for opposing their disembarkation.<sup>1</sup>

The sons of the great Cunobelin, Caractacus and Togodumnus, wielded the forces of the Trinobantes and held a primacy of rank and power among the chiefs of South Britain. Like their ancestor Cassivellaun, and following the usual tactics of their German neighbours, they abstained from meeting the invader in the field, and ensconced themselves in the forests, or behind the rivers, where he could only attack them at a disadvantage. Plantius, however, pushed boldly forward, worsted both princes in succession, and received the submission of some clans of the Boduni, as they are called by Dion, the same, it is generally supposed, as the Dobuni of Ptolemy, the inhabitants of modern Gloucestershire.<sup>2</sup> Placing a garrison in this district, he advanced to the banks of a broad river, which the Britons deemed impassable; but a squadron of Batavian cavalry, trained to swim the Rhine and Wahal, dashed boldly across it, and dislodged them from their position by striking at the horses which drew their chariots. A force under Flavius Vespasianus penetrated into the unknown regions beyond, and obtained, not without great hazards, some further successes. Such was the command in which this brave and strenuous captain was first *shown to the Fates*, which from henceforth destined him for empire.<sup>3</sup> His empire and his dynasty soon passed away; but Providence designed him for its instrument in a work of wider and more lasting interest. On the plains of Britain Vespasian learnt the art of war, which he was to practise among the defiles of Palestine, and against the despair and fury of the Jews.

Successes of  
Plantius and his  
lieutenant Vespasianus.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lx. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ptol. *Geogr.* ii. 3. 25. 28. Smith's *Dict. of Class. Geography*.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Agric.* 13.: "Monstratus fatis Vespasianus,"

From the mention of the Boduni or Dobuni it is natural to suppose that the broad stream above mentioned was the Severn near its mouth. Yet it is difficult to imagine that Plautius can have advanced so far into the country in the few weeks since his landing, and the language of Dion seems presently to contradict it. The defeated Britons, says this writer, retired to the Thames, and placed that river between themselves and the Romans in the lowest portion of its course, where it swells to a great breadth with the tidal waters of the ocean. The invaders, he continues, attempting to follow them, fell, in their ignorance of the ground, into great danger: but again the Batavians swam their horses across the river, and the barbarians were routed once more with much slaughter. In this battle Togodumnus was slain: Caractacus had perhaps retired to the West, where we shall meet with him again. A few only of the Romans were lost in the pursuit among the marshes.<sup>1</sup>

Not probable  
that Plautius  
crossed the  
Severn.

Plautius, it would seem, now for the first time firmly planted himself on the north bank of the Thames. It is impossible to suppose that if he had once reached the Severn, he would have again fallen back behind a barrier which he must have already crossed or doubled. Nor, as I have said, is there time allowed for such distant operations. For he now sent to summon Claudius to pass over into Britain, and assist personally in the final reduction of the twice broken Trinobantes. He awaited behind his entrenchments his chief's arrival. Claudius made his appearance before the end of the military season. I can discover no river that will answer the description of the historian, except the Medway; and if any reliance is to be placed on the terms in which Dion expresses himself, we must believe that instead of traversing half the island unopposed, Plautius first met the Britons in the neighbourhood of Maidstone or Rochester. The three divisions of his army may have converged from the three most fre-

He awaits the  
arrival of Clau-  
dius on the  
North bank of  
the Thames.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lx. 20.



quented of the Kentish ports, at Canterbury. But it is better to confess the impossibility of tracing his movements. Dion is throughout very indistinct in his conception of British history and geography, and when Tacitus himself comes to our aid, we shall find his knowledge also slender and superficial.

Plautius had been instructed to call the emperor to his assistance, if difficulties should occur that deserved his august interference. The legatus was perhaps courtier enough to divine his master's wishes, and to represent the state of affairs according to his desire.

Claudius enters  
Britain in person  
and subdues the Trinobantes.

Claudius held himself ready for the expected summons, and there can have been no delay in his reply to it. Perhaps he had already gone forth to meet it. Leaving the conduct of affairs at home to Vitellius, his colleague in the consulship, he proceeded by the route of Ostia and Massilia, attended by a retinue of officers and soldiers, and a train of elephants already bespoken for the service. His resolution was tried by adverse winds, which twice drove him back, not without peril, from the coast of Gaul.<sup>1</sup> When at last he landed, his course was directed partly along the military roads, partly by the convenient channels of the navigable rivers, till he reached the coasts of the British sea. At Gesoriacum he embarked for the opposite shores of Cantium, and speedily reached the legions in their encampment beyond the Thames. The soldiers, long held in the leash in expectation of his arrival, were eager to spring upon the foe. With the emperor himself at their head, a spectacle not beheld since the days of the valiant Julius, they traversed the level plains of the Trinobantes, which afforded no defensible position, till the natives were compelled to stand at bay before the stockades which encircled their capital Camulodunum. It is not perhaps too bold a conjecture that the lines which can still be traced from the Colne to a little wooded stream called the Roman river, drawn across the approach to a tract of twenty or thirty square miles surrounded on every

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 17.

other side by water, indicate the ramparts of this British oppidum.<sup>1</sup> Within this inclosed space there was ample room not only for the palace of the chief and the cabins of his people, but for the grazing land of their flocks and herds in seasons of foreign attack; while, resting on the sea in its rear, it commanded the means of reinforcement, and, if necessary, of flight. But the fate of the capital was decided by the issue of the encounter which took place before it. The Trinobantes were routed. They surrendered their city, and, with it, their national freedom and independence. The victory was complete: the subjection of the enemy assured: within sixteen days from his landing in Britain, Claudius had broken a powerful kingdom, and accomplished a substantial conquest. He left it to Plantius to secure by the usual methods the fruits of this signal success, and returned himself immediately to Rome, from which he had not been absent more than six months altogether.<sup>2</sup>

Claudius had gained a victory: some indeed were found to assert in after times that the foe had never met him in the field, and had yielded city and country without a blow: but his soldiers undoubtedly had hailed him repeatedly, in the short space of sixteen days, with the title of Imperator, and he was qualified by the purport of his laurelled despatches to claim the crowning honour

Claudius  
triumphs at  
Rome.

<sup>1</sup> These lines have a fosse traceable on their western side; they were therefore defences against attack from the land, not from the sea. At one or two points they are strengthened by small rectangular castella, which may be later Roman additions; and it is difficult to point out any other period of our history when the defence of the little peninsula on which Colchester stands could have given occasion to works of this nature. It is asserted, moreover, that British coins have been found in these works.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, ix. 21. Suetonius (*Claud.* 17.) declares that the conquest was bloodless: "Sine ullo prælio aut sanguine intra paucissimos dies parte insulæ in deditionem recepta sexto quam profectus erat mense Romam rediit, triumphavitque." He evidently wishes to disparage the emperor's exploit, as unworthy of a triumph. At a later period it was not less extravagantly magnified. Orosius says of Claudius: "Orcadas etiam insulas ultra Britanniam in Oceano positas Romano adjecit imperio." (vii. 5.).

of a triumph as the meed of conduct and valour. We have seen already how the senate hastened to decree him this distinction; how he received the appellation of Britannicus; how arches crowned with trophies were erected to him in Rome and at Gessoriacum; how, finally, he deprecated the evil eye of Nemesis by an act of ungainly humiliation. Cheap and frivolous as these honours now were, the conquests of Claudius were really solid and extensive, and with due precaution on the part of his lieutenants, might have been firmly established from that moment. They were soon destined, indeed, to suffer a grave disaster: but this, which broke for a moment the steady current of victory, served only to apprise the conquerors of the real condition of their position, and compel them to complete the unfinished work of subjugation, and settle at once the fate of Britain for four hundred years.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The high estimation in which the exploits of Claudius were held appears from the inscription (imperfect and conjecturally supplied) upon his arch of triumph—

TI. CLAUDIO Drusi f. Cesari  
AUGUSTO Germanico Pio  
PONTIFICI Max. Trib. pot. ix.  
COS. V. IMPERATORI xvi. pat. patriæ  
SENATUS POPULUSQUE Rom. quod  
REGES BRITANNIÆ perduelles sine  
ULLA JACTURA celeriter cepit (?)  
GENTESQUE extremarum Orcadum (?)  
PRIMUS INDICIO facto R. imperio adiecit (?)

See Bunsen's *Rom.*, iii. 3. p. 91., Orell. *Inscr.* 715.; and compare the lines in Seneca's *Medea*, which the moderns have regarded as a prophecy, but may really have been meant to indicate a recent event in history:

Venient annis sæcula seris  
Quibus Oceanus vincula rerum  
Laxet, et ingens pateat tellus,  
Tethysque novos detegat orbes,  
Nec sit terris ultima Thule."

Compare again:

"Parcite O Divi, veniam precamur  
Vivat ut tutus mare qui subegit."

See the preface of Lipsius to his edition of Seneca's works. These passages would be more interesting could we feel more confidence in their presumed authorship.

It seems not impossible that the prompt submission of the Trinobantes in the East was caused by the retreat of the main forces of the nation westward; for it is in the western parts of the island that we next hear of the operations of the invaders, and the chief who most obstinately resists them is still the Trinobantine Caractacus. Vespasian's advance into the West. Vespasianus, whose deserts have already been mentioned, attracted the notice of the emperor during his brief visit to the camp. He was now sent in command of the second legion to reduce the Belgæ and Damnonii, who occupied the south-western regions from the Solent to the Axe, and from the Axe to the Tamar or the Land's End. From the Isle of Wight, the Vectis of the Romans, to the rugged barrier of Dartmoor Forest; he engaged them in thirty battles. Many a fosse and mound, many a tumulus of heroes' bones, on the hills of Wilts and Dorset, still bears silent testimony to these obscure and nameless combats; and the narrow gorge of the Teign, deeply scarred with alternately round and square entrenchments, was the scene, perhaps, of the last desperate struggles for the garden of Britain.<sup>1</sup>

It may be conjectured that the conquest of this part of the island was facilitated by the cowardice or treachery of the people of the East. Cogidubnus, king of the Regni, acknowledged himself a vassal of the Romans, and consented to be their instrument for the enslavement of his countrymen. He attached himself as a client to the emperor, and assumed the

Subjugation of the Regni and cowardly submission of the Iceni.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 44., *Agrie*. 13, 14. Eutropius gives the number of thirty-two battles. Suet. (*Vespas.* 4.): "Duas valdissimas gentes, superque viginti oppida, et insulam Vectem, Britanniae proximam, in ditionem redegit." In extending the operations westward of the Isle of Wight I indulge only in conjecture; but the numerous coins of Claudius which have been found at Isca Damnoniorum, or Exeter (see Shortt's *Isca Antiqua*), indicate a very early occupation of this distant position. Isca may still have retained the importance it evidently once possessed as the emporium of the Mediterranean tin trade. Coins of the Greek dynasties of Syria and Egypt have been found there in great abundance.

name of Tiberius Claudius.<sup>1</sup> The Iceni, also, instead of uniting with the Trinobantes in the defence of their common freedom, appear to have yielded without a blow to the influence of the invaders. From their position on the eastern coast, and their habits of intercourse with the Roman traders of the Rhine and Scheldt, they may have learnt already to tremble at the power of the conquerors, or to covet their luxuries. As far, therefore, as their authority extended to the wild forests of the interior, and possibly even to the coast of the Irish Sea, they seem to have retained the native tribes in stolid inactivity, while their neighbours were successively robbed of independence. Their king Prasutagus, blindly rejoicing in the downfall of the chiefs of Camulodunum, opened his own strongholds to the visits of Roman officials, and allowed himself insensibly to fall under the tutelage of tribunes and quæstors. His offer of a small tribute, in acknowledgment of deference or subjection to Rome, was soon made a pretext for vexatious impositions; and the encroachments thus hazarded on the liberties of his people goaded them at last to resistance and insurrection.<sup>2</sup>

Plautius was recalled to Rome, to enjoy the reward of his services, in the year 800. His successor Ostorius Scapula found himself on his arrival beset by the refractory Britons in various quarters, and putting his forces at once in marching order, aimed a severe blow in the direction from which the annoyance seemed chiefly to proceed. In order to confine the still un-

Campaign of  
Ostorius Scapula.

A. D. 47.  
A. V. 800.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Agric.* 14.: "Quædam civitates Cogidubno Regi donatæ (is ad nos-  
tram usque memoriam fidiassimus mansit) vetere ac jam pridem recepta populi  
Romani consuetudine, ut haberet instrumenta servitutis et Reges." The name  
of Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus is preserved in the curious inscription at Chi-  
chester.

<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt that Frisians, Saxons, and Danes had settled on  
the eastern coasts of Britain before the Roman invasion. It seems probable  
that the Anglican character of the population of Norfolk and Suffolk dates  
from the pre-Roman period. Hence we might account for the want of union  
between the Iceni and the Trinobantes. The name Iceni is still evidently re-  
tained in many localities of their district, as in Icknield, Ickworth, Exning, &c.

conquered tribes within the boundary of the Severn, he drew a double line of posts along the course of that river and the Avon, into the heart of the island.<sup>1</sup> This last measure, perhaps, roused the jealousy of the Iceni, or inflamed their discontent. It seems to have trenched on some rights of sovereignty exercised by them in those parts, and threatened to overawe them, faithful as they had proved themselves, no less than the turbulent barbarians of the West. They flew suddenly to arms, suffered a severe defeat, and again relapsed into a state of sullen submission. Peace being thus restored in his rear, Ostorius had leisure to penetrate into the country of the Cangî, a tribe which our antiquaries have commonly placed in the furthest corner of Carnarvonshire, the promontory or peninsula of the Cangani.<sup>2</sup> There is not much, indeed, to support this bold conjecture: nevertheless, wherever the true locality is to be sought, the relations of the Roman commander now extended far over Britain; for he was recalled from his attack upon the Cangî by a hostile movement of the Brigantes, a people who undoubtedly held the regions north of the Mersey, and whose power extended from sea to sea.<sup>3</sup> No sooner were these ill-combined efforts repressed, and submission secured by a judicious mixture of energy and moderation, than the attention of Ostorius was called to the coercion of the Silures, the people of South Wales, who continued, under the guidance of Caractacus, to threaten the

and has certainly a Tuetonic sound. It has been suggested that, though written by the Greeks *Λεγνολ*, the second syllable, which disappears in all these words, was probably short.

<sup>1</sup> The ground on which we tread here, following the general consent of our critics from Camden downwards, is most uncertain. Neither the names nor the construction can be made out clearly from the MSS. of Tacitus. Ritter reads: "Cunctaque castris Avonam usque et Sabrinam fluvios cohibere parat." Tac. *Ann.* xii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ptol. *Geogr.* ii. 8. Tacitus, however, declares that Ostorius nearly reached the Irish sea: "Ductus in Cangos exercitus . . . vastati agri . . . jam ventum haud procul mari quod Hiberniam insulam aspectat." *Ann.* xii. 32. Ritter reads "Decantos," a name found also in Ptolemy, for "Cangos." Neither tribe is mentioned elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> Seneca calls them "cæruleos scuta Brigantas" (*Apocol.* 12).

outposts of the Roman power, and obstruct their communications. From the name of their chief, who seems, as before observed, to have been the son of Cunobelin, it would appear that the Silures, far westward as their district lay, bore some relation of dependence or descent to the leading nation of the

Foundation of  
the colony of  
Camulodunum.

A. D. 50.

A. U. 803.

East. This relation is again indicated by the establishment, of which we are now apprised, of a colony at Camulodunum, on purpose to check and overawe them.<sup>1</sup> Ostorius was commissioned by the emperor to plant a military colony in Britain, to become the stronghold of the Roman power in the island. For this purpose the site of the Trinobantine capital, far as it was removed from the seat of hostilities at the time, was chosen. If far from the Severn and the mountains of Siluria, it lay so much the nearer to Gaul, and the centre of the Roman resources. It was the proper base of the Roman operations for the entire subjugation of the island. If not in the direct route from Gessoriacum and Lugdunum to Britain, it was not far distant from it; it lay to the north of the broad Thames; it overshadowed the dubious territories of the Iceni; while the prompt submission of the Regni on the shores of the channel, might avail to exempt them from the burden of so unwelcome a guest in their peaceful country. Farther, the establishment of a colony in the country of the Trinobantes, involving as it did the confiscation of a portion of their soil, the utter subjection of their people, the overthrow of their civil polity, might be inflicted on them to punish the protracted resistance of their chief among the distant tribes to whom he had betaken himself. On all these accounts the foundation of the colony of Camulodunum may not seem so irrelevant, as some have considered it, to the contest now pending between the Romans and the Silures.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Such is the express declaration of Tacitus: "Id quo promptius veniret (i. e. the reduction of the Silures), Colonia Camulodunum . . . deducitur."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 32. It is on account of this presumed incongruity that some antiquarians have actually supposed that Camulodunum was somewhere in North Wales.

Under the republic the colony was a direct offshoot from the parent city: a number of citizens were told off by lot to occupy, like a swarm of bees, to which they were commonly compared, their appointed station; and the soil of the conquered land was appropriated to them as their *ager* or national territory. As an offset from a nation of soldiers the colonists were themselves all soldiers, and their new city, founded on the principles of the old, was in fact a stationary camp, furnished with the same civil and military appliances as the metropolis itself; not only with the streets and houses, the walls and ditch, but with the temples and tribunals, above all with the sacred Augural, or spot on which the auspices might be duly observed. But the citizen had now lost most of his military traditions. When he migrated to a foreign settlement, it was generally as a private trader or adventurer. The civilian could no longer be induced to relinquish his peaceful indulgences and go forth armed and booted, in the prospect of a slender patrimony to be cultivated with toil and defended with his blood. On the other hand the paid defenders of the state,—the military profession, as it had now become,—were no longer fit to return, after many years of service, to the staid habits of the municipium from which they had been levied: they retained no taste for the amenities of civil life, and might even be dangerous in the crowded streets and among the mutinous rabble of a vicious city. The colony was now merely a convenient receptacle for the discharged veterans of the camp. Transferred from active duty in the field or the parade, to which they were no longer equal, they were expected to maintain, as armed pensioners of the state, the terror of the Roman name on the frontiers by their proud demeanour and habits of discipline, rather than by the strength of hands now drooping at their sides. The lands of the Trinobantes were wrested from their ancient possessors and conveyed to the new intruders: the veterans established themselves in the dwellings of the hapless natives, desecrated their holy places, applied to their own use their

Character of the  
Roman colony  
in Britain.



goods and chattels, perhaps even their wives and daughters; and if they left them any rights at all, set up tribunals of their own to decide every matter in dispute with them. The colonists in an assembly of their own, like the comitia of the Roman people, chose their own officers, and governed themselves by their own regulations and by-laws; holding themselves ever ready to fly to arms in defence of their common usurpation. In the colony of Camulodunum the Britons beheld an image, rude indeed, and distorted, of the camp on the Rhine or Danube, combined with the city on the Tiber. They enjoyed, as far as they could learn to appreciate it, a faint reflex of the civilization of the South, and were taught to ascribe the fortune of their conquerors to the favour of strange divinities, to whom altars were erected and victims slain. But to none of these did they see such honour paid

Inauguration of  
the worship of  
Claudius at Ca-  
mulodunum.

as to Claudius himself, in the name of none were so many vows conceived, as of the emperor whose person they had once beheld visibly among them; of whom they still heard by report, as the presiding genius of the empire, the centre of the world's adoration. A temple of unusual size and splendour was erected to this divinity in the colony of Camulodunum, or the Conquering Claudian, as it was officially styled, special estates were granted for its service, and the most distinguished among the Britons were invited to enrol themselves in the college of the Claudian Flamens.<sup>1</sup>

In one respect, however, the new colony fell short both of the city and the camp, on the plan of which it was designed. The capital of the Trinobantes has already been described as a vast enclosure for retreat from invasion, occupied by clusters of straggling huts and cabins, with no continuous streets, still less with any regular fortifications. Such a mode of agglomeration, common to the Britons with the Germans, and at least the

Security of the  
Romans.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 31.; Orell, *Inscript.* 208.: "Colonia Victricensis quæ ex in Britannia Camuloduni."

northern Gauls, was altogether foreign to the habits of the Romans, who dwelt always in compact masses of habitations, laid out on plans comparatively regular, and defended by works of military art. The oppidum was the British, the urbs was the Roman city. But the veterans who now occupied the stronghold of Cunobelin were too indolent, it seems, to trace the lines of a fortress for their own protection: they found the site of their new dwellings agreeable, the houses even of the Britons were to the rude inmates of the tent not inconvenient: they furnished themselves with a temple, a senate-house, and even a theatre for the amusement of their idleness; they erected a statue of Victory to commemorate their triumph; but they delayed to construct the necessary defences, and in contemptuous disregard for the conquered enemy, continued to enjoy their new-acquired ease with no apprehensions for their future security.<sup>1</sup> However slight might be the influence of this type of southern culture upon the distant Silures, the Iceni, whose frontier bordered closely upon it, were powerfully affected. They beheld with admiration the advance of luxury and splendour, and acquiesced once more, with increasing fervour, in the terms of unequal alliance proffered by the Romans.

Thus doubly secured by the influence of arms and arts in his rear, Ostorius was enabled to bring the whole weight of his forces to bear on the still unconquered Silures. For nine years Caractacus, at the head of the independent Britons, had maintained the conquest with the invaders. The genius of this patriot chief, the first of our national heroes, may be estimated, not from victories, of which the envious foe has left us no account, but from the length of his gallant resistance, and the magnitude of the operations which it was necessary to direct against him. How often he may have burst from the mountains of Wales, and swept with his avenging squadrons the fields of the Roman settlers on the Severn and the Avon,—how often

Resistance of  
Caractacus and  
the Silures.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 31.: "Dum amoenitati prius quam usui consulitur."

he may have plunged again into his fastnesses, and led the pursuers into snares prepared for them beyond the Wye and the Usk,—remains for ever buried in the oblivion which has descended on the heroic deeds of the enemies of Rome. Worn out, or starved out, or circumvented perchance by the toils ever closing around him, he made a last effort to remove the seat of war from the country of the Silures to that of the Ordovices or North Wales, the common boundary of the two lying probably between the Wye and the Teme.<sup>1</sup> Ostorius having returned from his foray among the Cangi, having chastised and pacified the Brigantes, and established at the same time his colony at Camulodunum, collected all his strength to crush this last effort of resistance. To attack the Silures he would descend probably from his northern stations along the course of the Severn; the Britons, hovering on the eastern flanks of the Welsh mountains, would draw him up one of their lateral valleys to the westward; but whether he forced his passage by the gorges of the Vernieu, or the upper Severn, by the Clun, the Teme, or the Wye, seems impossible to determine. Each of these routes has had its advocates, and to this day the surviving descendants of the Britons contend with generous emulation for the honour of the discovery. All along the frontier of the principality every hill crowned with an old entrenchment, and fronted by a stream, has been claimed as the scene of the last struggle of British independence; there are at least six Richmonds in the field, and the discreet historian must decide between them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From the distances marked in the XII. and XIII. *Itinera* of Antoninus it has been supposed that Branogenium (of the Ordovices) is at Leintwardine on the Teme, and Magna (of the Silures) at Kentchester, a little north of the Wye. The boundary, therefore, would lie between these two rivers.

<sup>2</sup> The spots which have been most confidently assigned for the last battle of Caractacus are Coxall Knoll, on the Teme, near Leintwardine (Roy); Cefn Carnedd, west of the Severn, near Llanidloes (Hartshorne, *Salop. Antiq.* p. 63); Caer Caradoc, on the Clun, in Shropshire (Gough's *Camden*, iii. p. 8, 13); and the Breiddhen hills, near Welshpool, on the Severn (*Archæol. Cambr.* April, 1851). A Roman camp, now called Castel Collen, may be traced as far west

Caractacus took up a position of his own choosing, where the means both of approach and of retreat were most convenient for himself and unfavourable to the enemy. It was defended in part by a steep and lofty acclivity; in part by stones rudely thrown together; a stream with no frequented ford flowed before it, and chosen bands of his best armed and bravest warriors were stationed in front of its defences.<sup>1</sup> To the spirit and eloquence of the chief the Britons responded with shouts of enthusiasm, and each tribe bound itself by the oaths it held most sacred, to stand its ground or fall, if it must fall, fighting. Ostorius, on his part, was amazed at the ardour of men whom he supposed to be beaten, cowed, and driven hopelessly to bay. He was even disconcerted at the strength of the British position, and the swarms which defended it. It was the eagerness of the soldiers rather than his own courage or judgment that determined him to give the signal for attack. The stream was crossed without difficulty, for every legionary was a swimmer, and the Britons had no engines

Last battle and overthrow of Caractacus.

as the Ython, near Rhayader, and here, too, a suitable locality might be found. But all is misty conjecture. It would seem that Ostorius, intending to strike at the centre of Siluria, was drawn north-westward by the movements of Caractacus into the country of the Ordovices, along one of the lateral valleys that issue from the Welsh mountains. Tacitus says only: "Transfert bellum in Ordovices." *Ann.* xii. 83.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c. "Præfuebat amnis vado incerto." This seems to imply, not that the stream was actually deep or rapid, but that crossing no road at the spot, it had no accustomed ford. Even the season of the year is not mentioned, so that we cannot tell whether the water was above or below its ordinary height. It seems, however, to have been crossed without difficulty. The character of Coxall Knoll, which many years ago I examined with more faith than I can now indulge in, is not inconsistent with the narrative. The river is now a narrow and shallow stream, at least in the middle of summer, and deeply tinged by the peat-mosses through which it flows: "Visus adhuc amnis veteri de clade rubere." The hill, steep in front, but easily accessible from the rear, is crowned with considerable earthworks. On descending from the spot which I believed to be the scene of the eclipse of British freedom, I found an Italian organ-boy making sport at an alehouse door to a group of Welsh peasants. I could not fail to moralize with Tacitus: "Rebus humanis inest quidam orbi."

for hurling missiles from a distance, nor were they noted even for the rude artillery of bows and slings. But they defended their rampart obstinately with poles and javelins, and from behind it dealt wounds and death upon the assailants till the Romans could form the tortoise, approach to the foot of the wall, tear down its uncemented materials, and bursting in, challenge them to combat hand to hand. Unequal to the shock of the Roman array, the Britons retreated up the hill; the Romans, both the light and the heavy-armed, pressed gallantly upon them, and imperfectly as they were equipped, they could withstand neither the sword and pilum of the legionary, nor the lance and spear of the allies. The victory, quickly decided, was brilliant and complete. The wife and daughter of Caractacus were taken; his brothers threw down their arms and surrendered.<sup>1</sup>

The brave chief himself escaped from the slaughter, evaded the pursuit, and found an asylum for a time in the territory of the Brigantes, leaving all the south open to the invaders. He might hope to remove the contest to the northern parts of the island, a land of streams and mountains like his own long-defended Siluria: but Cartismandua, the female chief of this nation (for though married she seems herself, rather than her husband Venutius, to have been actual ruler of the Brigantes), was determined by her own fears and interests to betray him to the Romans. The fame of his nine years' struggle had penetrated beyond the British isles and the Gaulish provinces; and when he was led captive through

Caractacus betrayed by Cartismandua. Exhibited at Rome and pardoned by Claudius.

<sup>1</sup> Caractacus, Togodumnus, and Adminius have been mentioned from Dion as the sons of Cunobelin. We have disposed of the two last; but Tacitus seems here to refer to other surviving brothers of the family. From this presumed discrepancy, coupled with the remoteness of the campaigns of Caractacus from the country of Cunobelin, it has been imagined that Dion was in error, and that the British hero was a native chief of the remote Silures, and not a Trinobantine. So also the Welsh traditions represent Caractacus as a Silurian; but are not these the traditions of a people hemmed in between the Severn and the Irish Channel, who had long forgotten that they had once extended to the German Ocean?

the streets of Rome, great was the curiosity of the citizens to behold the hero who had rivalled the renown of Arminius and Tacfarinas. The triumph of Claudius had been solemnized before; but the emperor gratified his vanity by exhibiting the British prince before the imperial tribunal. A grand military spectacle was devised, in which Claudius appeared seated before the gates of the prætorian camp, attended by his guards, and surrounded by the multitude of citizens. Agrippina, clothed like himself in a military garb, took her seat on the tribunal by his side, the ensigns of a Roman army floating over her head. The slaves and clients of the vanquished prince were first led before them, with the glittering trophies of his arms and accoutrements. Behind these marched the brothers, the wife, and the tender daughter of the hero, and their pusillanimous wailings moved no pity in the spectators. But the bearing of Caractacus himself, who closed the train of captives, was noble and worthy of his noble cause: nor did it fail to excite the admiration it deserved. He was permitted to address the emperor. He reminded Claudius that the obstinacy of his resistance enhanced the glory of his defeat; were he now ignominiously put to death, the fate of so many worsted enemies of Rome, his name and exploits would be soon forgotten; but if bid to live, they would be eternally remembered, as a memorial of the emperor's clemency. The imperial historian was easily moved by an appeal to his yearning for historic celebrity.<sup>1</sup> He granted the lives of his illustrious captives, and bade them give thanks, not to himself only but to his consort, who shared with him the toils and distinctions of empire. It was politic as well as merciful to spare the legitimate claimant of a British throne; to keep him at Rome to be employed as occasion might suggest: and thus Caractacus, we may believe, was retained, together with his family, in honourable custody, till

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xli. 36-38. Such an act of clemency in a Roman emperor must not be passed by without especial notice. Claudius stands in honourable contrast to the murderers of Pontius, of Perses, of Jugurtha, and Vercingetorix.

he grew old in long-deferred hope of restoration. They were enrolled perhaps among the clients of the Claudian house; and indulgence may be challenged for the pleasing conjecture, that *Claudia the foreigner, Claudia the offspring of the painted Britons*, whose charms and genius are celebrated by Martial, was actually the child of the hero Caractacus.<sup>1</sup>

The victory had been the most complete, and in its results the most important, that had yet occurred in Britain; and there was no mean servility in the senators extolling the emperor's fame and fortune to the skies, and comparing him to a Scipio and a Paulus, who had exhibited a Syphax and a Perses to the applauding citizens. To Ostorius was accorded the triumphal ornaments; but he had not yet leisure to repose on his laurels, for the Britons flew again to arms on the capture of their champion, and maintained on the skirts of their mountain fastnesses a warfare of forays and surprises, which still kept the Romans on the alert. Again and again defeated, they still found means to revenge their losses. Harassed and decimated, they retaliated by bloody massacres. They were roused to despair, however fruitless, by the ferocious threats of the prefect, who vowed to destroy and extinguish their very name, as that of the Sigambri, once so formidable, had been utterly obliterated in Germany.<sup>2</sup>

On the death of Ostorius, which shortly ensued from chagrin, it is said, as much as from fatigue, the province was entrusted to Didius, sent in haste from Rome to take the command. During the interval, while the legions perhaps were careless or reluctant in their obedience to an inferior officer, the Roman arms suffered an ignominious check from

<sup>1</sup> Martial, ii. 54., iv. 18. This was the faith of Fuller, Stillingfleet, and our old ecclesiastical historians, who identified this princess at the same time with Claudia, the convert of St. Paul. More favour has been recently shown to the ingenious hypothesis of Mr. Williams, who infers, from the remarkable inscription at Chichester, that the Claudia of Martial and St. Paul was daughter of king Cogidubnus. On this subject I shall have occasion to speak again.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. xii. 38, 39.

the Silures, and the province itself seemed for a moment to lie at their mercy. The arrival of Didius, old and inactive as he was, served to brace again the discipline of his armies, and they recovered their superiority. But the transient shock their reputation had suffered broke the charm of success. Cartimandua, who had delivered Caractacus to the Romans, and in return had been upheld by their influence against the indignation of her countrymen, was now expelled from her realm by a popular insurrection. Relying on her foreign defenders, she had driven away her mock-husband Venutius, slain some of his kinsmen, and degraded herself to the embrace of a menial. The Brigantes took the side of the injured husband, placed him, as a noted warrior, at their head, attacked the queen in her stronghold, and had nearly succeeded in overpowering her, when Didius interfered, and released her from her peril. But the new prefect did not attempt to recover the footing of the Romans in the North. He allowed Venutius to seat himself once more on the throne of the Brigantes, and was content with keeping watch over his power, and occasionally advancing an outpost beyond his borders. Such was the state of affairs which continued to subsist in this quarter twenty years later.<sup>1</sup>

Cartimandua  
overthrown by  
her own sub-  
jects.

Thus unsettled were the limits of the Roman occupation at the close of the reign of Claudius. The southern part of the island from the Stour to the Exe and Severn formed a compact and organized province, from which only the realm of Cogidubnus, retaining still the character of a dependent sovereignty, is to be subtracted.<sup>2</sup> Beyond the Stour, again, the territory of the Iceni constituted another extraneous dependency. The government of the province was administered from Camulodunum, as its capital; and the whole country was overawed by the martial

The Roman  
province of  
Britain.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 40.; *Hist.* iii. 45.; *Agrie.* 14.: "Parta a prioribus continit paucis admodum castellis in ulteriora promotis."

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, who entered public life thirty years later, says of him (*Agrie.* 14.). "Is ad nostram usque memoriam fidissimus mansit."



attitude of the Conquering Colony there established. Already, perhaps, Londinium, though distinguished by no such honourable title, excelled it as a place of commercial resort. The broad estuary of the Thames, confronting the waters of the Scheldt and Maas, was well placed for the exchange of British against Gaulish and German products; and the hill on which the city stood, facing the southern sun, and adapted for defence, occupies precisely the spot where first the river can be crossed conveniently. Swept east and west by the tidal stream, and traversed north and south by the continuous British roads, Londinium supplied the whole island with the luxuries of another zone, just as Massilia had supplied Gaul.<sup>1</sup> Hither led the ways which penetrated Britain from the ports in the Channel, from Lyme, Richborough and Dover. From hence they diverged again to Camulodunum north-east, and to Verulamium north-west, where the chief lines of communication intersected one another. While the prefect, as governor-in-chief of the province, was occupied on the frontier in military operations, the finances were administered by a procurator; and whatever extortions he might countenance, so slight was the apprehension of any formidable resistance, that not only the towns, now frequented by thousands of Roman traders, were left unfortified, but the province itself was suffered to remain almost denuded of soldiers. The legions now permanently quartered in Britain were still the four which have before been mentioned. Of these the Second, the same which under the command of Vespasian had recently conquered the south-west, was now perhaps stationed in the forts on the Severn and Avon, or advanced to the encampment on the Usk, whence sprang the famous city of Caerleon, the camp of the Legion.<sup>2</sup> The Ninth was placed in guard

Station of the  
presidiary legions.

<sup>1</sup> Milton: "Me tenet urbs *reflua* quam Thamesis alluit unda;" not Reading or Windsor, but London, the only city on the tidal waters of the Thames.

<sup>2</sup> The Roman towns and villas, which have been discovered in such numbers along the course of the Severn and Avon, grew probably out of their system of defences against the long untamed brigandage of the western mountain-

over the Iceni, whose fidelity was not beyond suspicion. We may conjecture that its headquarters were planted as far north as the Wash, where it might dislocate any combinations these people should attempt to form with their unsteady neighbours the Brigantes. The Twentieth would be required to confront the Brigantes also on their western frontier, and to them we may assign the position on the Deva or Dee, from which the ancient city of Chester has derived its name, its site, and the foundations, at least, of its venerable fortifications.<sup>1</sup> There still remained another legion, the Fourteenth; but neither was this held in reserve in the interior of the province. The necessities of border warfare required its active operations among the Welsh mountains, which it penetrated step by step, and gradually worked its way towards the last asylum of the Druids in Mona, or Anglesey. The Gaulish priesthood, proscribed in their own country, would naturally fly for refuge to Britain: proscribed in Britain, wherever the power of Rome extended, they retreated, inch by inch, and withdrew from the massive shrines which still attest their influence on our southern plains, to the sacred recesses of the little island, surrounded by boiling tides, and clothed with impenetrable thickets. In this gloomy lair, secure apparently, though shorn of might and dignity, they still persisted in the practice of their unholy superstition. They strove, perhaps, like the trembling priests of Mexico, to appease the gods, who seemed to avert their faces, with more horrid sacrifices than ever. Here they retained their assemblies, their schools, and their oracles; here was the asylum of the fugitives; here was the sacred grove, the abode of the awful Deity, which eers. The Cæsars had their Welsh marches as well as the Plantagenets. Isca Silurum must have been an important post for the protection of the Roman Ironworks in the Forest of Dean.

Retreat of the  
Druids into An-  
glesey.

<sup>1</sup> The position of the headquarters of the Second legion at Isca Silurum (Caerleon), and of the Twentieth at Deva (Chester), is established from lapidary remains. These may be no doubt of a later period, but, as a general rule, these positions, after the first consolidation of the Roman power, were permanent.

in the stillest noon of night or day the priest himself scarce ventured to enter, lest he should rush unwitting into the presence of its Lord.<sup>1</sup>

Didius had been satisfied with retaining the Roman acquisitions, and had made no attempt to extend them; and

Suetonius Paulinus routs the Britons in Anglesey.

A. D. 61.

A. U. 814.

his successor, Veranius, had contented himself with some trifling incursions into the country of the Silures. The death of Veranius prevented, perhaps, more important operations. But he had exercised rigorous discipline in the camp, and

Suetonius Paullinus, who next took the command, found the legions well equipped and well disposed, and their stations connected by military roads across the whole breadth of the island. The rumours of the city marked out this man as a rival to the gallant Corbulo, and great successes were expected from the measures which he would be prompt in adopting. Leaving the Second legion on the Usk to keep the Silures in check, and the Twentieth on the Dee to watch the Brigantes, he joined the quarters of the Fourteenth, now pushed as far as Segontium on the Menai straits.<sup>2</sup> He prepared a number of rafts or boats for the passage of the infantry; the stream at low water was, perhaps, nearly fordable for cavalry, and the trusty Batavians on his wings were accustomed to swim by their horses' sides clinging by the mane or bridle, across the waters, not less wide and rapid, of their native Rhine. Still the traject must have been perilous enough, even if unopposed. But now the further bank was thronged with the Britons in dense array, while between their ranks, the women, clad in black and with hair dishevelled, rushed like furies with flaming torches, and behind them were seen the Druids raising their hands to heaven, in-

Lucan iii. 423,—

“ Medio cum Phœbus in axe est,  
Aut cœlum nox atra tenet, pavet ipse sacerdos  
Accessus, dominumque timet dependere luci.”

<sup>2</sup> Segontium is the modern Caernarvon. There is every appearance of great changes having taken place in the line of coast in this neighbourhood.

voking curses on the daring invaders. The Romans were so dismayed at the sight that, as they came to land, they at first stood motionless to be struck down by every assailant. But this panic lasted but for a moment. Recalled by the cries of their chiefs to a sense of discipline, of duty, of danger, they closed their ranks, advanced their standards, struck, broke and trampled on the foe before them, and applied his own torches to his machines and waggons. The rout was complete; the fugitives, flung back by the sea, had no further place of retreat. The island was seamed with Roman entrenchments, the groves cut down or burnt, and every trace speedily abolished of the foul rites by which Hesus had been propitiated, or the will of Taranus consulted.<sup>1</sup>

From this moment the Druids disappear from the page of history; they were exterminated, we may believe, upon their own altars; for Suetonius took no half measures. But: whatever were his further designs for the Discontent of the Iceni. final pacification of the province, they were interrupted by the sudden outbreak of a revolt in his rear. The Iceni, as has been said, had submitted, after their great overthrow, to the yoke of the invaders: their king Prasutagus had been allowed indeed to retain his nominal sovereignty; but he was placed under the control of Roman officials; his people were required to contribute to the Roman treasury: their communities were incited to a profuse expenditure which exceeded their resources; while the exactions imposed on them were so heavy that they were compelled to borrow largely, and entangle themselves in the meshes of the Roman money-lenders. The great capitalists of the city, wealthy courtiers, and prosperous freedmen, advanced the sums they called for at exorbitant interest; from year to year they found themselves less able to meet their obligations, and mortgaged property and person to their unrelenting creditors. Among the immediate causes of the insurrection which followed, is mentioned the sudden calling in by Seneca, the richest of

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xiv. 30.

philosophers, of the large investments he had made, which he seemed in danger of losing altogether.<sup>1</sup>

But the oppression of the Romans was not confined to these transactions. Prasutagus, in the hope of propitiating the provincial government to his family, had bequeathed his dominions to the republic. He expected perhaps that his wife and his children, who were also females, if not allowed to exercise even a nominal sovereignty after him, would at least be treated in consequence with the respect due to their rank, and secured in the enjoyment of ample means and consideration. This was the fairest lot that remained to the families of the dependent chieftains, and the Romans had not often grudged it them. But an insolent official, placed in charge of these new acquisitions after the death of Prasutagus, forgot what was due to the birth and even the sex of the wretched princesses. He suspected them, perhaps, of secreting a portion of their patrimony, and did not scruple to employ stripes to recover it from the mother, while he surrendered her tender children to even worse indignities. Boadicea, the widowed queen of the Iceni, was a woman of masculine spirit. Far from succumbing under the cruelty of her tyrants and hiding the shame of her family, she went forth into the public places, showed the scars of her wounds, and the fainting forms of her abused daughters, and adjured her people to a desperate revenge. The Iceni were stung to frenzy at their sovereign's wrongs, at their own humiliation. The danger, the madness, of the attempt was considered by none for a moment. They rose as one man: there was no power at hand to control them: the Roman officials fled, or, if arrested, were slaughtered; and a vast multitude, armed and unarmed, rolled southward to overwhelm and extirpate the intruders. To the Colne, to the Thames, to the sea, the country lay entirely open. The legions were all removed to a distance, the towns were unenclosed, the Roman traders settled in them were untrained

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lxi. 2. Dion is ill-natured; yet I do not think he can have invented this story; and Brutus had done the like.

to arms. Even the Claudian colony was undefended. The procurator, Catus Decianus, was at the moment absent, and being pressed for succour, could send no more than two hundred soldiers for its protection. Little reliance could be placed on the strength of a few worn-out veterans: the natives, however specious their assurances, were not unjustly distrusted, for they too, like the Iceni, had suffered insolence and ill-treatment. The great temple of Claudius was a standing monument of their humiliation: for its foundation their estates had been confiscated, for its support their tribute was required, and they regarded as victims or traitors the native chiefs who had been enrolled in its service. Whatever alarm they might feel at the indiscriminate fury of the hordes descending upon them, they smiled grimly at the panic which more justly seized the Romans. The guilty objects of national vengeance discovered the direst prodigies in every event around them. The wailings of their women, the neighing of their horses, were interpreted as evil omens. Their theatre was said to have resounded with uncouth noises; the buildings of the colony had been seen inversely reflected in the waters of their estuary; and at ebb-tide ghastly remains of human bodies had been discovered in the ooze.<sup>1</sup> Above all, the statue of Victory, planted to face the enemies of the republic, had turned its back to the advancing barbarians and fallen prostrate before them. When the colonists proposed to throw up hasty entrenchments they were dissuaded from the work, or impeded in it by the natives, who persisted in declaring that there was no cause for fear; it was not till the Iceni were actually in sight, and the treachery of the Trinobantes no longer doubtful, that they retreated tumultuously within the precincts of the temple, and strengthened its slender defences to support a sudden attack till succour could arrive.

Surprise and  
capture of Cam-  
ulodunum.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 32.: "Visam speciem in æstuario Tamesæ subversæ colonie." The "estuary of the Thames" may comprise the whole extent of the deep indentation of the coast between Landguard Point and the North Foreland.

But the impetuosity of the assault overcame all resistance. The stronghold was stormed on the second day, and all who had sought refuge in it, armed and unarmed, given up to slaughter.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the report of this fearful movement had travelled far and wide through the country. It reached Petilius

Suetonius hastens to retrieve the disaster.

Cerialis, the commander of the Ninth legion, which I suppose to have been stationed near the Wash, and he broke up promptly from his camp to hang on the rear of the insurgents. It reached the Twentieth legion at Deva, which awaited the orders of Suetonius himself, as soon as he should learn on the banks of the Menai the perils in which the province was involved. The prefect withdrew the Fourteenth legion from the smoking groves of Mona, and urged it with redoubled speed along the highway of Watling Street, picking up the best troops from the Twentieth as he rushed by, and summoning the Second from Isca to join him in the South. But Pænius Postumus, who commanded this latter division, neglected to obey his orders, and crouched in terror behind his fortifications. The Iceni turned boldly on Cerialis, who was hanging close upon their heels, and routed his wearied battalions with great slaughter. The infantry of the Ninth legion was cut in pieces, and the cavalry alone escaped to their entrenchments.<sup>1</sup> But the barbarians had not skill nor patience to conduct the siege of a Roman camp. They left the squadron of Cerialis unmolested, nor did they attempt to force the scat-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 31, 32.; *Agric.* 16.: "Nec ullum in barbaris sævitias genus omisit ira et victoria." The atrocities inflicted on the captives are described in horrid detail by Dion, lxii. 1-7.; τὰς γὰρ γυναῖκας τὰς εὐγενεστάτας καὶ εὐπρεπεστάτας γυμνὰς ἐκρέμασαν, καὶ τοὺς τε μαστοὺς ἀνδρῶν περιέτερον, καὶ τοῖς στόμασι σφῶν προσέρραπτον, ὥπως ἑὶ καὶ ἐσθλίουσαν αὐτοὺς ὁρῶντες καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο πασάλοις ὀξείαι διὰ παντὸς τοῦ σώματος κατὰ μήκος ἀνέπαιραν. In the immediate neighbourhood of Colchester a skeleton is said to have been found which, from the implements lying by it, seems to have been that of a Roman priest, buried head downwards: καὶ ταῦτα πάντα, says Dion, ἐδρίζοντες.

<sup>2</sup> The site of this battle has been assigned, with some probability, from the great tumulus at that spot, to Wormingford, six miles north of Colchester.

tered posts around them. After giving Camulodunum to the flames, they dispersed throughout the country, plundering and destroying. Suetonius, unappalled by the frightful accounts which thronged upon him, held on his course steadfastly with his single legion, broke through the scattered hands of the enemy, and reached Londinium without a check.<sup>1</sup> This place was crowded with Roman residents, crowded still more at this moment with fugitives from the country towns and villas: but it was undefended by walls, its population of traders was of little account in military eyes, and Suetonius sternly determined to leave it, with all the wealth it harboured, to the barbarians, rather than sacrifice his soldiers in the attempt to save it.<sup>2</sup> The policy of the Roman commander was to secure his communications with Gaul: but he was resolved not to abandon the country, nor surrender the detachments hemmed in at various points by the general rising of the Britons. The precise direction of his movements we can only conjecture. Had he retired to the southern bank of the Thames, he would probably have defended the passage of that river; or had the Britons crossed it unresisted, the historians would not have failed to specify so important a success. But the situation of Camulodunum, inclosed in its old British lines, and backed by the sea, would offer him a secure retreat where he might defy attack, and await reinforcements; and the insurgents, after their recent triumphs, had abandoned their first conquests to wreak their fury on other seats of Roman civilization. While, therefore, the Iceni sacked and burnt first Verulamium, and next Londinium, Suetonius made, as I conceive, a flank march towards Camulodunum, and kept ahead of their pursuit, till he could choose his own position to await their attack. In a valley between undulating hills, with woods in the rear, and

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 38.: "At Suetonius mira constantia medios inter hostes Londinium perrexit."

<sup>2</sup> "Unius oppidi damno servare universa statuit." Our early antiquarians could trace the remains of a Roman encampment at Islington, which they supposed to have been the quarters of Suetonius at this moment.



the ramparts of the British oppidum not far perhaps on his right, he had every advantage for marshalling his slender forces; and these were increased in number more than in strength by the fugitives capable of bearing arms, whom he allowed to cling to his fortunes.<sup>1</sup> Ten thousand resolute men drew their swords for the Roman Empire in Britain. The natives, many times their number, spread far and wide over the plain; but they could assail the narrow front of the Romans with only few battalions at once, and the waggons, which conveyed their accumulated booty and bore their wives and children, thronged the rear, and cut off almost the possibility of retreat.

But flushed with victory, impatient for the slaughter, animated with desperate resolution to die or conquer, the Britons cast no look or thought behind them.

Defeat of the  
Isenl.

Boudicea drove her car from rank to rank, from nation to nation, with her daughters beside her, attesting the outrage she had endured, the vengeance she had already taken, proclaiming the gallant deeds of the queens before her, under whom British warriors had so often triumphed, denouncing the intolerable yoke of Roman insolence, and declaring that whatever the men might determine, the women would now be free or perish. The harangue of Suetonius, on the other hand, was blunt and sarcastic. He told his men not to mind the multitudes before them, nor the noise they made: there were more women among them than men: as for their own numbers, let them remember that in all battles a few good swordsmen really did the work; the half-armed and dastard crowds would break and fly when they felt again the prowess of the Roman veterans. Thus encouraged, the legionaries could with difficulty be restrained to await the

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Comitantes in partem agminis acceperat." I am indebted to the Rev. Mr. Jenkins, of Stanway, near Colchester, for this conjecture with regard to the direction of the march, and the site of the battle. His views are explained in a tract in the *Archæologia*, 1842; and I may refer the reader to some further remarks upon them in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. xcvii. His speculations, I may add, have been of the highest value to me, though I must be content sometimes to follow them "non passibus æquis."

onset; and as soon as the assailants had exhausted their missiles, bore down upon them in the wedge-shaped column, which had so often broken Greeks, Gauls and Carthaginians. The auxiliaries followed with no less impetuosity. The horsemen, lance in hand, pierced the ranks which still kept their ground. But a single charge was enough. The Britons were in a moment shattered and routed. In another moment, the Romans had reached the wide circumvallation of waggons, among which the fugitives were scrambling in dismay, slew the cattle and the women without remorse, and traced with a line of corpses and carcases the limits of the British position. We may believe that the massacre was enormous. The Romans declared that 80,000 of their enemies perished, while of their own force they lost only 400 slain, and about as many wounded. Boadicea put an end to her life by poison: we could have wished to hear that the brave barbarian had fallen on a Roman pike. Suetonius had won the greatest victory of the imperial history; to complete his triumph, the coward, Postumus, who had shrunk from aiding him, threw himself, in shame and mortification, on his own sword.<sup>1</sup>

By this utter defeat the British insurrection was paralyzed. Throughout the remainder of the season the Romans kept the field; they received reinforcements from the German camps, and their scattered cohorts were gradually brought together in a force which overawed all resistance. The revolted districts were chastised with fire and sword, and the systematic devastation inflicted upon them, suffering as they already were from the neglect of tillage during the brief intoxication of their success, produced a famine which swept off the seeds of future insurrections. On both sides a fearful amount of de-

Final suppression  
of the insurrection.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 34-37.; *Agrie.* 16. Dion, lxi. 12. From the slender accounts we have received of this outbreak it would seem to have been confined to the Iceni, which makes it the more probable that these people were a different race from the Celtic Britons. Their numbers as indicated by Dion, and even by Tacitus, deserve little reliance.

struction had been committed. Amidst the overthrow of the great cities of southern Britain, not less than seventy thousand Roman colonists had perished. The work of twenty years was in a moment undone. Far and wide every vestige of Roman civilization was trodden into the soil. At this day the workmen who dig through the foundations of the Norman and the Saxon London, strike beneath them on the traces of a double Roman city, between which lies a mass of charred and broken rubbish, attesting the conflagration of the terrible Boadicea.

The temper of Suetonius, as may be supposed from what has been already said of him, was stern and unbending, even beyond the ordinary type of his nation. No succeeded by a milder policy. other officer, perhaps, in the Roman armies could have so turned disaster into victory, and recovered a province at a blow; but it was not in his character to soothe the conquered, to conciliate angry passions, to restore the charm of moral superiority. Classicianus, who was his next procurator, complained of him to the emperor, as wishing to protract hostilities when every end might be obtained by conciliation. A freedman of the court, named Polycletus, was sent on the delicate mission, to judge between the civil and the military chief, and to take the measures most fitting for securing peace and obedience. Polycletus brought with him a large force from Italy and Gaul, and was no less surprised perhaps than the legions he commanded, to see himself at the head of a Roman army. Even the barbarians, we are told, derided the victorious warriors who bowed in submission to the orders of a bondman. But Polycletus could make himself obeyed at least, if not respected. The loss of a few vessels on the coast furnished him with a pretext for removing Suetonius from his command, and transferring it to a consular, Petronius Turpilianus, whose temper and policy inclined equally to peace.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, as an admirer of Trajan, can never forego a gibe at captains who preferred the conquests of peace to those of warfare. Of this Turpilianus he says: "Is non irritato hoste, neque laessitus, honestum pacis nomen segni otio imposuit."—*Ann.* xiv. 89.

From the lenity of this proprætor the happiest consequences evidently ensued. The southern Britons acquiesced in the dominion of Rome, while the northern were awed into deference to her superior influence. Her manners, her arts, her commerce, penetrated far into regions yet unconquered by the sword. Her establishments at Londinium, Verulamium, and Camulodunum rose again from their ashes. Never was the peaceful enterprise of her citizens more vigorous and elastic than at this period. The luxuries of Italy and the provinces, rapidly increasing, required the extension to the utmost of all her resources. Manufactures and commerce were pushed forward with unexampled activity. The products of Britain, rude as they were, consisting of raw materials chiefly, were demanded with an insatiable appetite by the cities of Gaul and Germany, and exchanged for arts and letters, which at least decked her servitude with silken fetters. The best of the Roman commanders,—and there were some, we may believe, among them both thoughtful and humane,—while they acknowledged they had no right to conquer, yet believed that their conquests were a blessing. The best of the native chiefs,—and some too of them may have wished for the real happiness of their countrymen,—acknowledged, perhaps, that while freedom is the noblest instrument of virtue, it only degrades the vicious to the lowest depths of barbarism.

Happy effects  
of this policy,  
and rapid pro-  
gress of civiliza-  
tion in Britain.

## CHAPTER LII.

THE FAMILY OF THE DOMITII.—EARLY YEARS OF NERO.—HIS EDUCATION UNDER SENECA.—STRUGGLE FOR INFLUENCE OVER HIM BETWEEN THE SENATE, HIS TUTOR, AND HIS MOTHER.—HE MAKES A FAVOURABLE IMPRESSION AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF HIS REIGN.—HIS INTRIGUE WITH ACTE AND GRADUAL PROGRESS IN VICE.—BEHAVIOUR OF AGRIPPINA AND SENECA.—PRAISE OF HIS CLEMENCY.—DISGRACE OF PALLAS.—MURDER OF BRITANNICUS.—DIVISION BETWEEN NERO AND AGRIPPINA.—INTRIGUES AGAINST HER.—CONSECRATION OF A TEMPLE TO CLAUDIUS.—FAVOURABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF NERO'S EARLY GOVERNMENT.—HIS FINANCIAL AND LEGISLATIVE MEASURES.—THE "QUINQUENNium NERONIS."  
—A. D. 54–59. A. U. 807–812.

**A** PECULIAR interest attaches to the history of the Romans through the greater part of its course, from the precision with which we can trace the character of families, descending often with the same unmistakeable lineaments from father to son, for many generations. We mark the pride of the Claudii; the turbulence of the Lepidi; the cool selfishness of the Pompeii. There is no more striking analogy between Roman and English history than this: it is only an aristocracy that can present us with a family history of public interest. The great men of democratic Athens stand out alone: no one cares to ask who were their fathers, or whether they left any sons. Had they sprung every one from the earth, as they fancifully boasted of their nation, their career and character could not have been, to all appearance, more independent of family antecedents. So strongly, however, were the features of the Roman family traced by the hereditary training of its members, that though the descent of blood was often interrupted by the practice of adoption, the moral aspects of its

Family character of the Domitii, the ancestors of Nero.

character were still broadly but clearly preserved, and it becomes of little importance to ascertain, in each particular instance, whether the race was actually continued by natural succession, or interpolated by a legal fiction. The hereditary traditions of the Scipios were reflected faithfully in the legal representatives of their house, though some of the greatest of the name were not really connected by ties of affinity with one another. It was enough that the sentiment of connexion was preserved by the link of the domestic cult, and the common inheritance of the family honours. It had been remarked, however, of the patrician Claudii that numerous as their branches were, none of them down to the time of Tiberius Claudius the emperor, had ever been reduced to the necessity of perpetuating itself by adoption; and many others, no doubt, of the chief Roman houses had preserved their blood-descent equally unbroken.<sup>1</sup> Such unquestionably had been for many generations the boast of some, at least, of the Domitii. The stock from which the emperor Nero sprang may be traced back from son to father for about two hundred years. The Domitian gens was widely spread and illustrious in every branch. An Afer, a Marsus, a Celer, a Calvinus, had all obtained distinction in one or other of the various careers which courted the buoyant energy of the Roman aristocracy. But of these houses none was so full of honours as that of the Ahenobarbi, the progenitors of the emperor Nero. It was illustrious for the high public part it played through several generations; illustrious for its wealth and consideration, for its native vigour and ability, but execrable at the same time above every other for the combination of ferocity and faithlessness by which its representatives were successively distinguished. The founder of the race, according to Suetonius, was a Lucius Domitius, to whom the Dioscuri announced the victory of Regillus, changing his beard from black to red in token of the divine

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 25. "Adnotabant periti nullam antehac adoptionem inter patricos Claudios reperiri, eosque ab Atto Clauso continuos duravisse." Comp. Suet. *Claud.* 39.

manifestation. Thenceforth the name of Ahenobarbi, the Red or Brazen beards, was common to the family, and they inherited, it was piously believed, the complexion as regularly as the name. Time went on, and the Red-beards enjoyed seven consulships: one of them filled the office of censor: the house was raised from the Plebs to the Patriciate. From Cnæus Domitius Ahenobarbus, consul in 632, the conqueror of the Allobroges, we have the descent complete. The son of this victorious imperator was chief pontiff and censor in 662; his temper was violent and his public conduct austere. *No wonder*, said of him the refined and graceful Crassus, *that his beard is of brass, for his mouth is of iron and his heart of lead.* The grandson was consul in 667, and being joined in marriage to a daughter of Cinna, took the side of the Marians in the first civil wars. The great grandson, Lucius, has been signalized in these pages as an upholder of the Optimates against Cæsar, the son-in-law and representative of Cinna, and therefore against his own father's friends. He perished after a career of furious partizanship, disgraced with cruelty and treachery, on the field of Pharsalia. The fifth in descent, a Cnæus, for the prænomen generally alternated, was the follower of Brutus and Cassius, sided afterwards with their foe Antonius, and finally deserted his falling fortunes for the luckier star of Octavius.<sup>1</sup> The sixth was Lucius Domitius, who crossed the Elbe with a Roman army, a man to be noted in the military annals of his country, but whose temper was as savage as his grandfather's, and his tastes so sanguinary that Augustus was compelled to check the bloodshed of his gladiatorial shows. The son of Lucius, the seventh in direct succession, was infamous for crimes of every kind; for murder and treason, for adultery and incest. He was mean as well as cruel, and even stooped to enrich himself by petty pilfering. Towards the end of Tiberius's reign he was subjected to a charge of Majesty, and would have perished, but for the opportune

<sup>1</sup> Yet this Domitius, according to Suetonius, was "by far the best" of his race. Suet. *Ner.* 2.

demise of the emperor. Married to Agrippina, the sister of Caius Caligula, he became the father of Lucius Domitius, afterwards Nero. He made a jest of his own enormities; and it was reported at least, that on the child's birth he replied to the felicitations of his friends by grimly remarking, that nothing could spring from such a father and such a mother but what should be abominable and fatal to the state.<sup>1</sup>

The commencement of the future emperor's career was clouded with perils and disasters. At the age of three years he lost his father's protection, and Caius, to whom, by way of precaution, two thirds of his Misfortunes of Nero's early years. patrimony had been bequeathed, shamelessly grasped the remainder also. The child thus despoiled, and rendered doubly an orphan by the exile of his mother, was left to the care of his father's sister, Domitia Lepida. By this selfish intriguer, the mother of Messalina, he seems to have been little cared for; his first tutors were a dancer and a barber; nevertheless his aunt appears to have considered, at least at a later period, that she had something of a mother's claims upon him. Claudius, however, kindly restored him his inheritance, together with the fortune of Crispus Passienus, who had been Agrippina's first husband, and was afterwards apparently united to another of his aunts, named also Domitia.<sup>2</sup> The favour of this emperor,

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 5, 6.; Dion, lxi. 2. This writer's history, in the shape in which we possess it, from book iv. to lx. is probably only an abridgment, the author of which is unknown. From book lxi. we have only the epitome of Xiphilius, which is still more meagre than the preceding, nor does it seem to be always faithful. It is often quoted under the name of the abbreviator. I have thought it, however, more convenient to preserve that of the original author.

<sup>2</sup> Care must be taken not to confound the two aunts of Nero, Domitia Lepida, usually known by her second name only, and Domitia. The first was wife to Valerius Messala, mother of Messalina, a rival of Agrippina, who got her put to death by Claudius: Tac. *Ann.* xii. 65. The other was second wife to Passienus, and though also an object of jealousy to Agrippina, survived her, and was supposed to have been eventually poisoned by Nero. Suet. *Ner.* 34.; Dion, lxi. 17.



if we may believe the rumours of the day, gained the child at an early period the jealousy of Messalina; and he narrowly escaped being smothered by her emissaries in the security of his midday slumber.

From this epoch his fortunes have already been traced to the moment of his accession. The position of the young

Domitius, as the son of a noble of the highest

*His education.*

class, closely allied with the reigning family, yet not directly in the line of succession, was peculiarly favourable to his education. The loss of his fierce and brutal father, when he was but three years old, was certainly no matter of regret. The superintendence of his early training would thus fall exclusively to his mother, interrupted only by the two years of her exile; and Agrippina seems, with all her faults, to have had at least a princely sense of the duty which thus devolved upon her. The child was docile and affectionate, apt to learn and eager for praise. His mother sought to imbue his mind with the best learning of the times, and at the same time to impart brilliancy and fascination to his manners. It was the fashion to complain of the decline of education at this period in the Roman world. Surrounded by vice and grossness of all kinds, and conscious of their degeneracy in virtue as well as their neglect of decorum, it was in the corrupt training of childhood that moralists seemed to discover the germ of the evils they deplored. But, as usual with reactionists in social life, who from imperfect experience and sympathies see the defects only of the present, and the good only of the past, they mistook the cause of the disease, and wasted their energies in declamations against an imaginary evil. It was the complaint of the day, that

*Complaints of the state of patrician education.*

children were no longer educated by their own mothers, but consigned in their tenderest years to the mercenary supervision, first of handmaids, and soon afterwards of pedagogues. Such, it was said, had not been the practice of Aurelia, the mother of Julius Cæsar; of Atia, the parent of Octavius; of Cornelia, from whom her sons, the Gracchi, distinguished for their eloquence, had imbibed the

rudiments of the Roman tongue.<sup>1</sup> Yet, according to the ancient usage, the child had always been removed from the women's chamber at seven years; and it cannot be pretended that the training of the first seven years of life could have laid deep the foundations either of the moral or the intellectual character. Indeed even the women, thus specially mentioned, were exceptions to the mass of the untutored matrons of Rome. Many mothers never taught their children anything up to the age of seven, and it was not unusual, nor undefended by some on principle, to leave them to learn even the rudiments of reading from the pedagogue after that epoch was passed.<sup>2</sup> This complaint, then, which is particularly advanced in the juvenile work of Tacitus (for as his, I think, the *Treatise on Orators* should be recognised), was, in fact, unfounded. The real quarrel, however, of the conservatives to whom he belonged, was with the practice, introduced in the last age of the republic, of sending children to public schools, instead of keeping them under tutors at home. Domestic tuition, the necessity of an early stage of society, seemed more dignified and aristocratic; it savoured of the idea that letters were a craft and mystery; that the learning of the noble was a privilege, not to be freely communicated to all classes; and on this account, unconsciously perhaps, it found patrons among the patriots of the imperial era, the upholders of every republican prejudice. It was easy then, as now, to point out the superficial evils of public education, the conceit and ostentation it may foster; but the patrician clung with peculiar tenacity to his cherished isolation and reserve, the qualities which, in his view, most proudly distinguished the high-born Roman from the Greeks, the Orientals, and the vulgar all over the world. Whatever tended to place the young noble on an equality with other men, to imbue him with liberal feelings, to break down the pride of caste and the traditions of antique usage, among which he had been born, was regarded by the purists of the empire

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *de Orator.* 28, 29.

<sup>2</sup> See Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* l. 1., who, however, objects to the practice.

with suspicion and dislike. A society which had no other safeguard but blind habit, might naturally be alarmed at anything which tended to innovation; but a few only of the most thoughtful of the nation perceived the downward progress of society around them; and even they too often mistook or misrepresented its causes.

Augustus, it is curious to remark, discovered means, in his usual spirit of compromise, of reconciling both the conflicting systems of education which he found in action. In his day, a certain Verrius Flaccus was a noted preceptor, and kept a school much resorted to by the young nobility. The emperor invited this teacher to undertake the education of his grandsons; but for this purpose he required him to remove his benches into the palace itself, and limit the number of his pupils.<sup>1</sup> This, indeed, was probably a solitary attempt to give to the children of the ruling family the stimulus of competition in a class. For them, with this exception, the old haughty fashion of solitary teaching was, as far as we can learn, still maintained. The children of Drusus and Germanicus seem to have been instructed in the pomp of antique exclusiveness, under the eye of pedagogues at home; and such was apparently the case with the young Domitius also.

Tiberius had betrayed a base jealousy of his grandchild Caius; but Claudius, still following the example of his illustrious ancestor, had shown no disposition to restrict the education of the son of Agrippina. It was the complaint of the day, that at a more advanced stage, everything was sacrificed to the study of rhetoric; and that the science of moral philosophy, which, in better times, had been conjoined with more practical training, was now entirely abandoned, as producing no immediate and tangible results. The most eloquent teachers deserted the less fashionable branch of instruction, and the *care of morals* fell into the hand of a lower class of teachers.<sup>2</sup>

Augustus compromises between public and private education.

Principles of education adopted by Seneca for his pupil Nero.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *De Illustr. Gramm.* 17.

<sup>2</sup> See Quintil. l. c.: "Nam ut lingua primum cœpit esse in quæstu, institu-

Yet it may be doubted whether this complaint was generally well founded; it is allowed, at least, that a reaction speedily followed, and professors of philosophy were soon found to teach the old course of ethical speculation, who rejected as frivolous the charms of oratory formerly used to embellish it.<sup>1</sup> But neither the one fault nor the other could be imputed to the master who was chosen, as we have seen, to form the mind and unfold the abilities of the young Domitius. L. Annæus Seneca, the son of the rhetorician Marcus, presents us with our completest specimen of the professed philosopher of antiquity. He was neither a statesman who indulged in moral speculation, like Cicero, nor a private citizen who detached himself, like Epicurus or Zeno, from the ordinary duties of life, to devote himself to the pursuit of abstract truth. To teach and preach philosophy in writing, in talking, in his daily life and conversation, was, indeed, the main object he professed; but he regarded all public careers as practical developments of moral science, and plumed himself on showing that thought may, in every case, be combined with action. His father, Marcus, in the course of a long life of successful teaching, may possibly have amassed a fortune; and his brother was adopted by a brilliant, and perhaps a wealthy declaimer. It is not unlikely, therefore, that Seneca inherited a good patrimony: nevertheless he must have found means of improving it very early, if the story be true, that the emperor Caius had marked him for death on account of his possessions. He continued, no doubt, to make the most of the favour of the great and powerful. If, in his precepts, he inculcates, with the Stoics, indifference to worldly advantages, the spirit he illustrated in his life was that of an earnest man of business. If he shrank from the profession of arms, and if even his eloquence was confined to speculative discussions, he played the true Roman in the art of making

tumque eloquentiæ donis male uti, curam morum qui disertis habebantur reliquerunt. Ea vero destituta infirmioribus ingeniis velut prædæ fuit."

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.: "Contempto dicendi labore, partem tamen potiore, si dividi posset, retinuerunt."

money beget money. At a time when the philosophers fell too generally into the error of dissuading men from the toils and perils of a public career, it was well that Seneca's precepts were not too strictly enforced by his own practice. His instructions were, on the whole, the best perhaps that could at that time have been imparted to a royal pupil. Both in sentiment and action, Seneca, with all his faults, rose no doubt far above the ordinary pedagogues of the day, the cringing slave, or the flattering freedman, to whom the young patricians were, for the most part, consigned. Doubtless, it was Seneca's principle of education to allure, possibly to coax, rather than drive, his pupil into virtue. He yielded on many points in order to borrow influence on others. He deigned to purchase the youth's attention to severer studies, by indulging his inclination to some less worthy amusements. To teach Nero eloquence and philosophy, it might be necessary to connive at his relaxations in singing, piping, and dancing. These were the recreations to which he most earnestly devoted himself, in which he believed himself to excel, and in which he acquired a tolerable proficiency: to make sonorous verses was not beyond his ability; but when he harangued, his tutor, we have seen, was obliged to compose his orations for him. Yet we might possibly find, were the truth known, that his abler predecessors had not trusted, in their first juvenile efforts, entirely to their own abilities. The attainments just mentioned would, no doubt, be frivolous in any man in princely station; and, it must be added, that in a Roman noble they were worse than frivolous, branded as they were by public opinion, the opinion at least of the best men, as culpable. Nevertheless, it was something to occupy the mind of a ruler of millions with any taste that was harmless and bloodless. Even the morose old Romans did not deny that music and singing were humanizing arts; they rather protested against humanity being made an object of instruction at all to the lords and conquerors of mankind.

In the midst however of creatures and sycophants, and

the vilest instruments of his elders' pleasures, the young noble could not fail to be affected by the most fatal influences.<sup>1</sup> From childhood he was steeped in enervating indulgences: the softness with which he was habitually treated, the delicacies with which he was pampered, relaxed the nerves both of his mind and body.<sup>2</sup> Clothed in purple and the gaudiest trappings, he was imbued with the vice of personal ostentation, and led step by step to the most inordinate desires.<sup>3</sup> The growing youth reclined indolently on beds of down.<sup>4</sup> His palate, in the phrase of Quintilian, was educated before his lips and tongue: the sensual tastes were cultivated before the moral.<sup>5</sup> The kitchen was more frequented than the lecture room.<sup>6</sup> Impertinence and immodesty were encouraged, the one by applause, the other by example.<sup>7</sup> The child soon followed his father to the theatres and the circus, the schools of all that was exciting to the worst passions; and, under the stimulus thus prematurely given, learnt to be a man before he had experienced the preparatory training of boyhood.<sup>8</sup>

Vicious moral training of the young nobles.

The feelings with which the youthful heir to the purple may generally be supposed to have entered on his succession, are picturesquely described by the poet Statius. *The child of the Persian Achaemenes balances, in joy and fear, the pleasures and the risks of sovereignty: Will his nobles continue faithful?*

Perils which surrounded the young emperor.

A. D. 84.  
A. U. 807.

<sup>1</sup> Quintil. i. 2.: "Nostros amicos, nostros concubinos vident; omne convivium obscenae cantilevis strepit; pudenda dicta spectantur. Fit ex his consuetudo, deinde natura."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.: "Infantiam statim deliciis solvimus. Mollis illa educatio, quam indulgentiam vocamus, nervos omnes et mentis et corporis frangit."

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: "Quid non adultus concupiscet qui in purpuris repit?"

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: "In lecticis crescant."

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: "Ante palatum eorum quam os instituimus."

<sup>6</sup> Senec. *Ep.* 95.: "In rhetorum et philosophorum scholis solitudo est; et quam celebres culinae sunt; quanta circa nepotum focos juvenus strepit!"

<sup>7</sup> Senec. *Cons. Sep.* 41, 12.: Tac. *de Orat.* 29.: "Per quae paulatim impudentia irrepsit et sui alienique contemptus."

<sup>8</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Histrionalis furor et gladiatorum equorumque studia, quibus occupatus et obsessus animus quantum loci bonis artibus relinquit?"

*will his people obey the rein? to whom shall he entrust the marches of the Euphrates? who shall keep for him the Caspian gates? He shrinks from the mighty bow of his father, and scarce dares to press his charger: the sceptre seems too heavy for his grasp; his brows have not yet grown to the compass of the tiara.*<sup>1</sup> Such was the constant condition of Oriental sovereignty; nor need the description be materially modified to suit the inheritance of the Cæsars. While conspiracies were rife against the reigning emperor, the presumptive heir was generally regarded with hope and affection. But his accession might at once direct every evil passion against himself; the senators might forget their oaths, the commons murmur at authority; and the chiefs of the legions on every frontier might corrupt the temper of the soldiers. If the genius of Nero's next predecessor was not fitted to dismay him by the grandeur of its proportions, he would still remember that he was the heir of Augustus and Julius, that he had succeeded to all their power, with none of their experience, and but little of their abilities. But it was within the palace, and amongst the members of his own family, that his perils chiefly lay. Those who were nearest to him might be the nearest objects of his distrust and apprehension. Agrippina and Britannicus were more formidable to him than Suetonius or Corbulo. His best counsellors early warned him against the dangerous encroachments of the first; of the second he learned to be jealous at least from the day of his accession. When Nero walked across the court of the palace leaning on the arm of Burrhus, to show himself to the prætorians, and solicit their support,

<sup>1</sup> Stat. *Theb.* viii. 286.:

“Sicut Achæmenius solium gentesque paternas  
Excepit ai forte puer, cui vivere patrem  
Tutius, incerta formidine gaudia librat,  
An fidi procerae, ne pugnet vulgus habenis;  
Cui latus Euphratis, cui Caspia limina mandet:  
Sumere tunc arcus ipsumque onerare veretur  
Patris equum; visusque sibi nec sceptrâ capaci  
Sustentare manu, nec adhuc implere tiam.”

his chief anxiety was to anticipate the claims of his half-brother. Though admitted himself by adoption into the reigning family, the sacred stock of the Claudii and the Julii, and thus become in a legal sense the eldest scion and legitimate heir of the Cæsarean house, he felt that a legal fiction could not extinguish the natural sense of right, and that still to the mass of the citizens Britannicus must appear the true representative of the father from whose loins he sprang. The stern self-repression of the Roman character, which had schooled itself to accept mere legal adoption as equivalent to blood-descent, had at length given way. Nature had reasserted her sway, and resented in thousands of bosoms the recognition of the child of Domitius as the eldest born of Claudius.<sup>1</sup>

Now however, more than ever, would the ribald stories against the wretched Messalina come into play. This was the moment when the sneers, retailed by a later generation, against the noble, *the highborn* Britannicus, would have their deepest significance.<sup>2</sup> These were the insinuations which now supported the tottering principle of the law, and seemed to justify the resolve of the soldiers. When the prætorians, prepared perhaps by Burrhus, had taken the part of the pretender, every popular scruple was speedily repressed. Law and the sword had both declared on his side; natural affection or respect, alone arrayed against them, shrank from the unequal contest, or yielded to the representations speciously palmed upon it. It was not worth while to contend for the heritage of a youth whose real parentage was obscured by such suspicions. To the ruling class, at all events, the dogmas of the law presented a sufficient plea for acquiescence: the nobles

Struggle for influence over Nero: the senate, the tutor, the mother.

<sup>1</sup> In the time of Dion the superiority of natural over legal descent seems to have been generally acknowledged. That writer begins his account of Nero's reign by declaring that Britannicus, as the legitimate, ought to have succeeded in place of Nero, the adopted son (lxi. l.): ἐκ δὲ δὴ τοῦ νόμου, he adds, καὶ τῷ Νέρωνι διὰ τὴν ποιήσιν ἐπέβαλλεν.

<sup>2</sup> Juvenal, vi. 124.: "Ostenditque tuum, generose Britannice, vultum."



of Rome were little disposed to risk their heads for a sentiment of justice or compassion. As long as he governed with decent respect to the pretensions of his nobility, Nero might regard himself as secure against the open rivalry of Britannicus: should he ever raise the alarm of the senate, then indeed the scion of the genuine Claudian stock might furnish a name to inscribe on the banner of a new revolution. The senate, with the instinct of selfish cowardice, fancied itself strong in the weakness of its ruler's title. The prince's advisers anxious for their charge, anxious for themselves, anxious also, we may believe, for the good of the commonwealth, took advantage of this state of affairs to promote good government, to make it the interest of all classes to maintain him. But it was easier to conciliate the senate and the people than to secure the confidence of the prince himself; to maintain their ascendancy over him against every rival; to guide his ardent and susceptible feelings into safe channels; above all, to supplant the influence of his mother, and prevent her from extending to his maturer years the authority she had exerted over his infancy. The woman who had subverted Messalina, who had murdered Claudius, who had removed from her path every rival without compunction, was resolved no doubt to hold fast the power to which she had waded through so much blood. It was not for Nero that she had plunged into this sea of crimes; however she might disguise it to her own conscience, her ambition was for herself more than for her son. She had already played the Emperor before the legions in the camp; she would not now resign the part to the stripling who occupied the palace. With this view Agrippina now leagued herself with the freedmen of the court, especially with Pallas, whose immense wealth, whose craft and long acquaintance with the springs of government, seemed to make him a more useful ally than the pedantic philosopher, or the rude captain. Though all-powerful with Claudius, Pallas seems from an early period to have become distasteful to Nero, who had at least the merit of rising above the flatteries of slaves and freedmen. Docile as he was to

Burrhus and Seneca, and easily cowed by the arrogance of his mother, against Pallas alone he evinced spirit and independence. To Agrippina, indeed, he was still fondly devoted. The first act of his reign was to demand fresh honours and compliments for her, and his first watchword, *The best of mothers*, was inspired probably by genuine affection.<sup>1</sup> From the camp the prætorians bore him into the senate-house, demanding by signs if not by words that he should be accepted as chief of the state; and before evening all the honours of empire were heaped upon him, of which he declined alone the title of Father of his Country. Of the testament of Claudius no notice was taken; nor are we informed what its provisions really were. Had it declared Nero the heir, it would of course have been duly recited. The funeral oration of the deceased was spoken, as might be expected, by his successor in person; an oration which Seneca was believed to have composed for him, and which displayed more graces of style than could be anticipated from the stripling himself. The mention it made of the late emperor's birth, and the triumphs of his ancestors, was received with marked attention; for in these family records the Romans took a national pride. They listened with respect to the boast of his learning, and to the assertion, true and honourable as it was, that his reign had been sullied by no external calamity. But when the speaker passed, by a natural transition, to the praise of his wisdom and discretion, the multitude burst into laughter. They had been wont, in the exuberant licence of the forum, to make Claudius their butt, and this scornful humour they had so long been permitted to indulge, that they could not now lay it aside when a last act of tardy justice was demanded of them. At the same time more thoughtful men remarked that Nero was the first of their princes who had needed help in making a speech. It was a painful token of the degradation into which they had fallen. If Nero was but seventeen years of age, Cæsar declaimed in the forum at twelve, Augustus at nineteen.

Nero pronounces the funeral oration over Claudius.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xiii. 2.; Suet. Ner. 9.

Tiberius was a practised orator. Caius, the madman, could harangue the senate with grace and vigour; even Claudius could speak with elegance after due preparation. But Nero, they remarked with a sigh or a sneer, had been directed to other studies. Sculpture and painting, singing and driving, such were the arts on which his sensibility had been occupied; yet in the occasional composition of verses it was allowed that he had shown himself not deficient in the elements of polite learning.<sup>1</sup>

From the Campus the orator returned to the Senate-house, and expounded to his nobles the principles of government he had been taught to prescribe to himself. They were not offended by his placing the *authority of the senate* on the same footing with the *consent of the soldiers*; and he made a favourable impression by reminding them that his youth had been implicated in no civil or domestic discords; he had no injuries to avenge, no enmities to prosecute. He promised to reject the most odious instruments of preceding administrations; he would not affect, like Claudius, to be the judge of all affairs in person, a pretence which could only result in throwing power into the hands of irresponsible assessors. In his household no office should be put up to sale; between his family and his people he would always scrupulously distinguish. The senate should retain all its prescriptive functions. Italy and the domains of the Roman people should look to the tribunals for justice. For himself he would confine his care to the provinces over which he was set to wield the sword of military command. This speech filled the senators with hopes of a mild administration; they decreed, in their joy, that the harangue should be engraved on silver, and recited annually on the accession of the consuls.\* At the same time their new ruler allowed them to act with some show of inde-

Favourable impression made by his first speech to the senate.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 3.: "Cælare, pingere, cantus aut regimen equorum exercere; et aliquando, carminibus pangendis, inesse sibi elementa doctrinæ ostendebat."

\* Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 4.; Suet. *Ner.* 10.; Dion, lxi. 3.

pendence. They hastened to profit by this brief respite to flout the system of delation from which they had so much suffered. With this view, apparently, they repealed the permission Claudius had given to accept fees and rewards for pleading causes.<sup>1</sup> And further, they relieved the quæstors designate from the burden of exhibiting gladiatorial shows, which the late emperor, in his zeal for the diversions of the populace, had laid upon them. But Agrippina pretended to complain, as though it were meant to *abolish the acts* of her husband; and she had influence enough with her son to make him convene the senators within the walls of the palace, where, though unable to control their proceedings, she could at least hear their deliberations from behind a curtain. Nor did she deign always to practise even this slight reserve. On one occasion, when an embassy from Armenia was awaiting audience, she prepared to seat herself beside the emperor; nor, dismayed though they were at this unprecedented arrogance, did the courtiers venture to interfere, till Seneca whispered to the prince to descend himself and, under pretence of filial duty, meet her at the foot of the throne.

Not the demeanour only, but the acts of Agrippina, might now justly cause alarm. From the day of her son's elevation she seemed resolved to play the empress.

She was borne in the same litter with him, or he walked by her side while she proudly rode aloft.<sup>2</sup>

Arrogant behaviour of Agrippina.

To mark the unity of place and purpose between herself and him, she caused coins to be stamped, on which the heads of both were conjoined.<sup>3</sup> She gave answers to ambassadors, and sent despatches to foreign courts.<sup>4</sup> She directed, without the emperor's privity, the murder of M. Silanus, proconsul of Asia. This man was accounted stupid and harm-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 5.: "Ne quis ad causam orandam mercede aut donis emetur." At a later period Nero seems to have restored the wiser provisions of Claudius. See Suet. *Ner.* 17.: "Ut litigatores pro patrociniiis certam justamque mercedem darent."

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lxi. 8.; Suet. *Ner.* 9.

<sup>3</sup> See Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 257.

<sup>4</sup> Dion, l. c.

less; he had caused no apprehension to the most jealous rulers, and Caius Caligula had been used to call him in contempt the *golden sheep*. But Agrippina feared that even his sluggish temper might be roused to avenge the murder of his brother Lucius, whom she had put out of the way before, as a possible rival to her son. Marcus Silanus was now removed by poison, administered by her agents, with hardly an attempt at disguise.<sup>1</sup> But the news of this crime could not reach Rome for some months, and the destruction of Narcissus, whom meanwhile she drove to death by cruel treatment in prison, was not regarded generally with disfavour. The senate and people were not yet alarmed. Burrhus alone and Seneca were startled at this virtual assumption of the power of life and death, conceded only to the emperors as a state necessity, and now, it was hoped, for ever abandoned even by them. They opposed themselves to her plans of personal cruelty and vengeance, and exerted themselves in strict alliance, to undermine the influence she still possessed over her son. There was little indeed in common in the character of the two associates. Burrhus was noted for his military bluntness, his sense of discipline and decorum, while Seneca was a courtier in manners, and affected to combine the man of the world with the philosopher. But the necessities of their position bound them closely together, and we may allow that both were equally disposed to form their pupil's mind, as far as possible, to virtue. They agreed, however, that a youth of his temper and in his position could be but imperfectly trained; and they agreed in the slippery policy of winking at some forms of

Close alliance  
of Seneca and  
Burrhus  
against her.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 1. The mother of the two Silani was a daughter of Julia and Lucius Paulus (Suet. *Oct.* 64.), possibly Æmilia Lepida by name (Suet. *Claud.* 26.); their father was App. Junius Silanus, killed by Claudius (Suet. *Claud.* 29.); and L. Silanus, one of the brothers, had been betrothed to Octavia, the sister of Britannicus. This near connexion with the imperial family, and the popular mutterings that he would make a better successor to Claudius than the stripling Nero, moved the jealousy of Agrippina against him. See Tac. l. c. and Ritter's note.

vice, or even enticing him to them, in order to divert him from more pernicious foibles, or crimes of deeper dye.<sup>1</sup>

The readiest means of weaning the young man from his childish dependence on his mother was to occupy him with an amorous intrigue. Nero was already betrothed to his half-sister Octavia; but this victim of family policy was unable to attract his affections,

Nero's intrigue  
with the freed-  
woman, Acte.

which were still free for another engagement. The care of his tutors was directed only to guard him from the fascinations of noble matrons, and avert the scandal of illegitimate connexions; and apparently without attempting to recall him to a sense of duty to his spouse, they were well pleased to see him devote himself, with the ardour of a first illusion, to the charms of a Greek freedwoman named Acte. The confidants of this amour were two companions a little above his own age, Salvius Otho, and Claudius Senecio, of whom the first was of distinguished family, the second the son of a freedman of the court; but both were notorious profligates, whose influence with him his mother had already noticed, and tried in vain to avert. Their power seemed confirmed by their participation in this secret (for the bashful youth still hoped it was a secret), and Agrippina was alarmed and incensed. Instead of biding the effects of pos-

Behaviour of  
Agrippina.

session on a first childish passion, she proclaimed to all around her indignation and fear, execrating in the coarsest terms the *freedwoman who dared to be her rival, the handmaid who aspired to be her daughter-in-law*. This violence overshot its mark, and threw the frightened and irritated youth into the arms of Seneca, who contrived to cast a veil over the intrigue, by finding a pretended lover for the object of his devotion. The mother now saw her mistake. Changing her tactics, she began to bid against the tutor by still greater indulgences, offering her own bosom for the secret confidences of his passion, her own apartment for the gratification of his impatient, but still timid, desires. She deigned to apologize

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xiii. 2.: "Juvantes invicem, quo facilius lubricam principis statem, si virtutem aspernaretur, voluptatibus concessis retinerent."

for her undue severity, and opened freely to his generous profusion the stores of her private coffers, which were hardly inferior to his own. But Nero was not so deceived; his advisers would not suffer him to be deceived. Indeed, such was the temper of Agrippina, that she could not long persist in the pretence of submission and indulgence, and Nero was mortified at her openly spurning the presents he made her, saying that he had nothing to give which she had not herself given to him.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly the influence of Seneca and Burrhus continued to rise. The confederates were far more wary in their proceedings. Their plan, as has been said, was to govern Nero by yielding to him, and they justified to themselves their tolerance of his failings by the assurance that they should thus save him from vices more odious and more fatal. The errors of Nero assumed gradually a deeper dye; his passions blossomed in vice, and bore fruit in crime; yet the downward progress was not precipitate; it was susceptible of palliation and disguise; it lurked long among the secrets of the palace, or was whispered only within the precincts of the court. High as the great Stoic philosopher strained the principles of virtue in his sublimest exhortations, he often acknowledged, in descending to a lower level, that for his own part he aspired only to be not the worst among bad men. *To the student, he says, who professes his wish and hope to rise to a loftier grade of virtue, I would answer that this is my wish also, but I dare not hope it. I am pre-occupied with vices. All I require of myself is, not to be equal to the best, but only to be better than the bad.*<sup>2</sup> He preached, he owns, more rigidly than he practised. But such confessions must not be regarded as the simple outpouring of conscious infirmity. We cannot doubt, from the general context of the speaker's declamations, that they are meant to disguise a considerable amount of self-satisfaction; that Seneca, like many preachers of vir-

Nero's gradual progress in vice—disguised by his ministers.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xiii. 13.: "Dividere filium quæ cuncta ex ipsa haberet."

<sup>2</sup> Seneca. Epist. 75., de Vit. Beat. 17.

tue and holiness, while he professed to sigh over his own weakness on some points, was convinced that in repudiating vices which were in truth less congenial to him, he was soaring far above the level of ordinary humanity. The morality he impressed upon Nero was such as this: *Be courteous and moderate; shun cruelty and rapine; abstain from blood*:—there was no difficulty in this to a young and popular prince, flattered on all sides, and abounding in every means of enjoyment:—*Compensate yourself with the pleasures of youth without compunction; amuse yourself but hurt no man*. It required no philosopher to give these lessons; and it may be questioned whether the comparative innocence of the young man's early indulgences would have been exchanged for grosser enormities under more vulgar tuition.

So, too, the praise of clemency which Seneca resounds in Nero's ears in the first year of his power, might be received with little emotion by one who had not yet felt the tyrant's inducements to cruelty. He regarded himself with complacency in the glass which, as Seneca expresses it, was there set up to reflect him. Let him turn his eyes, says the philosopher, on the great mass of mankind, wicked, turbulent, ready at any moment to reduce the world to anarchy, could it only succeed in breaking the imperial yoke imposed on its evil passions. Let him reflect that he has been chosen from the whole race of man to enact the part of God upon earth; he is the arbiter of life and death, of every fortune and position. *These thousands of swords, let him say, which my Peace retains in their scabbards, are ready to leap forth at my nod: what nations shall be destroyed; or what removed; who shall be freed and who enslaved; what kings shall be enthroned or dethroned; what cities built or razed; all belongs to my absolute decision. Possessed of all this power, no anger has impelled me to the infliction of unjust punishments; no youthful heat of mine, no rashness or contumacy of my people, no, nor yet the too common pride of proving the extent of my power, has tempted me to wanton violence. This day, if the gods require it, I*

Seneca's praise  
of Nero's clemency.



am prepared to read before them the roll of all the subjects they have given me charge of. . . . This, O Caesar, he continues, you may boldly affirm, that none of the things which have fallen into your hands, have you by force or by fraud usurped. Innocence, the rarest merit of princes, innocence is yours. You have your reward. No man was ever so dear to his friend, as you are to the Roman people. Henceforth none will quote the conduct of the divine Augustus, or the first years of Tiberius: none will look beyond yourself for an example of virtue: we shall gauge the remainder of your principate by the flavour of your first twelve-month.<sup>1</sup> From this last expression it appears that the tract was composed towards the end of Nero's first year of government, and up to that period at least, according to the writer's testimony, his administration had been unsullied by cruelty or any glaring crime. Yet the evidence of history cannot be set aside which declares that it had already been disgraced by a deed of the most heinous dye; and whatever might be its general colour thus far, this deed alone was enough to suffuse it with an indelible stain.

It would seem that Agrippina's intrigues to recover her influence in the palace had met with little success. While still sparing his mother from the feelings of fear or respect which had not yet lost all their force, he intimated his dissatisfaction by removing the favourites on whose counsels she leaned, or by whose hands she acted. He disgraced Pallas, who had acted as the chief minister of Claudius, and now demanded of the new emperor a pledge that no inquiry should be made into his transactions in that capacity; that all accounts, as he phrased it, between himself and the state should be considered as settled. Deprived of his offices, and dismissed from court, he was exposed shortly afterwards to a

Disgrace of Pallas: alarm and menaces of Agrippina.

A. D. 55.  
A. U. 803.

<sup>1</sup> Senec. *De Clementia*, l. 1.: "Principatus tuus ad anni gustum exigitur." Such is the admirable reading elicited by Lipsius from the MS. *ad augustum*, which, though conjectural, seems sufficiently certain.

charge of conspiring against the emperor, from which Seneca himself defended him. But meanwhile his disgrace alone sufficed to arouse the terrors of Agrippina. Forgetting her recent dissimulation, she gave vent to furious menaces and reproaches. Mortified at the growing influence of her son's tutors, she had intimated to him that it was to her he owed the empire: she now went further, and let him understand not less plainly that she had the means of withdrawing it again.<sup>1</sup> The patroness of Pallas declared aloud that Britannicus, now approaching his fourteenth birthday, was arrived at manhood:<sup>2</sup> she proclaimed him the genuine offspring and natural heir of Claudius, and threatened to divulge openly the secret horrors of the palace, to avow the iniquity of her marriage, and even confess the murder of her husband. But whatever, she said, were her crimes, one thing more she had done: she had preserved the life of her stepson. Now she would rush with him to the camp. The soldiers should decide between the daughter of Germanicus and the wretched Burrhus and Seneca, who presumed, forsooth, to sway the empire of the world, the one with his maimed hand, the other with his glib professor's tongue. Thus saying, she clenched her hand in an attitude of menace, and stormed with bitter curses, adjuring the spirit of the deified Claudius, and the shades of the murdered Silani, and the victims of all the crimes she had herself, now it seemed in vain, committed.<sup>3</sup>

That Nero should be alarmed at this defiance was only natural: we cannot doubt that it now first impressed him

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lxi. 7.

<sup>2</sup> I suppose him to have been born in the first year of Claudius, the twentieth day of his reign, i. e. February 12. 704. Suet. *Claud.* 27. But this writer is wrong in placing this date in the *second* consulship of Claudius. Tacitus, again, is in error in saying that Nero was only two years his senior. He must have been the elder by more than three years. See *Ann.* xii. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 14.: "Audiretur hinc Germanici filia, inde vilis rursus Burrhus et exul Seneca trunca scilicet manu et professoria lingua generis humani regimen expostulantes." We do not know whether the "trunca manus" refers to an actual mutilation, or is merely figurative.

Nero's plea for  
the murder of  
Britannicus.

with a sense of the danger to be apprehended from his mother's temper, and made him feel that while Britannicus lived his own life and throne were in her power.<sup>1</sup> He had assumed the purple, as we have seen, in October. Already, before the end of the year, in the third month of his reign, whether from rising jealousy towards him, or from mere capricious ill-humour, he had insulted the poor child in the presence of his boon companions. At a supper he gave during the Saturnalian festival in December, he had taken occasion, as *king of the feast*, to mortify his bashful timidity by requiring him to stand up and sing before the company. Even the half-tipsy revellers had been shocked at this indignity, for as such it was regarded, and expressed still more pointedly their compassion when Britannicus chanted a lyric stave on the sorrows of the dis-crowned and disinherited.<sup>2</sup> The emperor was disconcerted; he began to brood from this time over the specious claims of the pretender, and Agrippina's threats satisfied him that they were really formidable. Yet he could make as yet no public charge against him, and he did not venture to command his execution, unarraigned and unconvicted. He resolved, we are assured, to take him off privily; and engaged a tribune of the guards, named Pollio, to devise safe and secret means. The infamous Locusta, who was at the moment in custody on a charge of poisoning, was taken into counsel. All the attendants who loved the poor youth had long since been removed from about him. There was no hand to intercept the noxious potions which were administered to him by his own tutors. But the poison seemed to fail of its effect, and Nero grew impatient.<sup>3</sup> He stormed at the tribune, he

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xlii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xlii. 15.: "Exorsus est carmen, quo evolutum cum sede patria rebusque summis significabatur." Suetonius repeats what may be called an idle insinuation, that Nero put Britannicus to death from jealousy of his skill in singing. *Ner.* 33.

<sup>3</sup> Sir G. Cornewall Lewis remarks on the failure of the first attempt to poison Claudius, as a proof that the art was not so well understood at this time at Rome as in certain periods of modern history. *Early Roman History*, ii.

menaced the poisoner, as traitors to his cause, and interested only in averting suspicion from themselves. They promised to serve him faithfully the next time; the poison was now prepared in the palace itself under the emperor's own eyes, and he was assured that it would cause death as swiftly as steel itself.<sup>1</sup> Confident of the result, he contrived his crime with an audacity perhaps unparalleled. Britan- Britannicus is  
 nicus was seated, as still a minor, at the table poisoned.

where the younger scions of the imperial family partook of their simpler meal together, while their elders banqueted in full state beside them. There the warm wine-cup was tasted in due course, and presented to him. He found it too hot, and in the drop of cold water which was infused into it so deadly a poison was conveyed, that the child, on swallowing it, fell back lifeless without a word or a groan. All the guests beheld it. Some rushed in terror from the apartment; others, warier, and more collected, still kept their seats, and bent their eyes on Nero. He, without rising from his couch, assured them placidly that such were the fits to which his brother was subject, and that his senses would soon return. The body was removed: the guests addressed themselves, as they were bidden, again to the banquet; but the alarm and horror of Agrippina, remembering perhaps the scene which had occurred four months earlier in that festive hall, were so marked, that it was clear to all that she at least was guiltless of this crime; while the wretched Octavia, with the self control which long necessity had taught her, suppressed all signs of emotion, and betrayed neither grief nor affection nor

485. note. Here is a second instance of inexperience. We must be the more cautious, therefore, how we trust to the many rumours of poisoning accredited by the Roman writers.

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius adds various particulars to the account of Tacitus. Nero, he says, called Locusta to him, abused and struck her, declaring that she had given an antidote instead of poison. When she excused herself, affirming that she had made the dose weak the better to disguise the crime: *As if*, he exclaimed, *I feared the Julian law* (against murderers and poisoners)! He then caused her to prepare the potion in his own apartments, and tried it on various animals, till he found it strong enough to kill a young pig instantaneously.

fear. That same night the corpse of Britannicus was consumed; his simple pyre had been prepared, it seems, beforehand. The obsequies took place in the Campus Martius, in the midst of a sudden tempest, betokening to the citizens the divine indignation at a deed of blood which men had generally agreed to excuse as a state necessity.<sup>1</sup> The accounts which Dion followed added a further horror to the scene, declaring that the rain washed off the paint with which the body had been coloured, and disclosed the livid stains of poison. In a winter's night, amidst the smoke of half-extinguished torches, such an incident could hardly have been observable.<sup>2</sup>

From first to last every circumstance connected with this hideous fratrioide was carried out with the same coolness and calculating prevision. No long-experienced adept in crimes of state could have acted with more consummate art than the timid stripling before us, who blushed at being discovered in the embrace of a freedwoman. No sooner were the hasty obsequies completed, than an edict followed in which their haste was excused and defended by argument and example. Nero adroitly seized this occasion to recommend himself to the citizens whose sensibility he had outraged. Having lost, he said, the support of a dear brother, he must now look for aid and sympathy to the republic itself. He claimed a deeper interest in the affections of his people since he had become the last of the imperial stock, the sole remaining hope of a nation to whom the blood of Caesar was dear. The emperor completed his crime by showering presents, houses, and estates on the favourites of the palace: among them were some, at least, whose professions of superior gravity made their participation in these spoils, for as such they were regarded, peculiarly invidious.<sup>3</sup> The hand of a master of

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 18.; Suet. *Ner.* 33. Suetonius, however, says that the funeral followed the next day.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lxi. 7. This assassination probably took place immediately after the birthday of Britannicus, the 12th, as before observed, of February.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 18. In this remark the interpreters have generally sup-

state-craft can hardly be mistaken throughout these proceedings; and there is one only, as far as we can judge, to whom it can be reasonably ascribed. Posterity, while it shrinks from condemning, must not venture to acquit him.<sup>1</sup> At all events, we have seen that, much later than this, the clemency of Nero's first year was celebrated by Seneca as the special glory of his own instructions. It is clear that, at least, after the deed was done he consented to absolve the perpetrator, and to persuade the world, as far as his silence could avail to persuade it, either that no murder had been committed, or that no defence was required for it.

Grounds for imputing this crime to the advice of Seneca.

The temptations under which the philosopher lay to this duplicity are sufficiently obvious. His influence could only be maintained by parrying the counter projects of Agrippina; and his influence once lost, there could be no more hope for Nero or for Rome, for himself no retreat but in absolute insignificance, could even that avail to save him. Undoubtedly his position was a trying one. He believed that his power at court enabled him to direct the empire for the general welfare. The common weal was, after all, the grand object of the heroes of Roman story. Few of the renowned of old had attained their eminence as public benefactors, without steeling their hearts against the purest instincts of nature. The deeds of a Brutus or a Manlius, of a Sulla or a Cæsar, would have been branded as crimes in private citizens; it was the public character of the actors that stamped them with immortal glory in the eyes of their countrymen. Even Seneca, sage as he was, was not superior to the sophistry

Importance of making Nero's power secure. Seneca aims at making him popular with the senate.

posed that he points at Seneca. Suetonius (l. c.) says that Locusta was rewarded with large estates, and provided with pupils to be instructed in the state mystery of poisoning.

<sup>1</sup> We need pay no attention, I think, to the charges of Dion against Seneca (lxi. 10.), which seem animated with more than his usual malignity against men of reputation for virtue, and miss, besides, the peculiar weaknesses which are justly imputable to the philosopher.

which might have justified the murder of Britannicus by the precedent of Romulus and Remus. Meanwhile he was studious in directing the public administration of his pupil to the general advantage of the empire, to the credit and advantage more particularly of the senatorial order, which was perhaps the best direction the government could at that moment take.<sup>1</sup> While it was the best for the people, it was, at the same time, the most prudent for the prince. A contented senate made a secure emperor. Claudius well understood this, and the favour he showed to this proud and privileged body was the secret of his immunity from senatorial conspiracies, and enabled him to quit the city for the provinces without apprehension, which Tiberius had never ventured to do. This policy was the most conducive also to the prince's reputation. The fame of Nero's five years rests mainly on the favour it obtained from a courted and therefore an indulgent senate. The fathers balanced against the crime of fratricide the fact that their chief had rejected statues of gold and silver; that he had refused to allow the year to commence with his own natal month of December; and retained the ancient solemnity of the Kalends of January; that he had checked with a gentle remonstrance the impetuous zeal which offered to swear to all his acts beforehand; that he had dismissed with contempt the charges of a delator against a knight and a senator.<sup>2</sup>

The schism between the mother and the son seemed now complete. Agrippina embraced the wretched orphan Octa-

<sup>1</sup> We may ascribe, perhaps, to the liberal views of the minister the geographical inquiries instituted by Nero in the direction of the Caspian Sea and the country of the Ethiopians (Plin. *H. N.* vi. 15. 35.), which were vulgarly supposed to be preparatory to some military enterprises. Comp. Senec. *Nat. Quæst.* vi. 8. The long digression of Lucan (*Phars.* x.) on the subject of the river Nile seems to indicate the interest of the best-informed men of the empire, and particularly, perhaps, of his uncle Seneca, in these expeditions of discovery. The yearning for extended physical knowledge is one of the most curious features of Lucan's poem.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 10. Comp. Suet. *Ner.* 10. "Agenti Senatui gratias respondit: quum meruero."

via, and declared herself the protectress of her injured innocence. She called her friends into consultation in private: she collected money from all quarters with an avidity which indicated some political project. She cultivated the regard of military officers, and caressed the remnant of the ancient nobility, as if seeking to make a party and secure a chief for it. All this was disclosed to Nero, who retaliated first by withdrawing the guard by which the empress was attended, and then removing her from her apartments in the palace to the mansion formerly inhabited by Antonia, that the attendants at his own receptions might have no pretext for presenting themselves to her likewise. When he paid her a formal visit here, he was always escorted by a military guard, and restricted the interview to a brief salutation. This marked disfavour had a strong effect on the courtiers. The door of Agrippina became rapidly deserted. Of her ancient friends none but a few women continued to visit her. Among these was Junia Silana, the spouse of C. Silius, whom Messalina had required him to divorce, and who now, in constant hatred of the dead empress, still clung to the side of her rival and successor. Yet she had a feud with Agrippina also; for when she had proposed to solace herself with another marriage, it was Agrippina who had set the object of her choice against her; and her present attachment was only simulated with a view to vengeance. As soon as she was assured that the mother had lost all influence with her son, she seized the moment to strike. She suborned two confederates to denounce Agrippina as conspiring against the throne, and averred that it was her scheme to raise Rubellius Plautus, the son of Blandus, who stood in the same relationship to Augustus as Nero himself, first to empire and then to her own bed.<sup>1</sup> There was another woman in the plot. The

Division between Nero and Agrippina.

Her enemies intrigue against her.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 19. Rubellius Plautus was son of Rubellius Blandus (already mentioned in chap. xlv.) and of Julia, daughter of Drusus, granddaughter of Tiberius. He was, therefore, through his grandmother, great-great-grandson of Augustus. Nero was great-great-grandson of Augustus through his grandfather Germanicus.



pretended conspiracy was divulged to a freedman of Domitia, whose hostility to Agrippina was well known: Domitia passed on the witnesses to Paris, a favourite of Nero; and late one night, in the sacred privacy of his carousal, the emperor was startled by the appearance of this confidential servant, with an assumed look of deep anxiety, and received intimation of the unnatural crime which was said to be meditated against him. The weak-spirited youth, whose nerves were already shaken with premature dissipation, believed without further inquiry, and would have yielded at once to the suggestions of his sudden alarm. He would have commanded not only the immediate execution of Plautus, but the removal of Burrhus from his military post, on the mere suspicion that, having been originally raised by Agrippina, he would be disposed now to support her. But these intrigues of the palace were, it is confessed, obscure even to the citizens at the time. Some writers affirmed that Burrhus was only kept in his place by the interposition of Seneca; while others, less notorious for their partiality to that statesman, made no mention of any doubt on Nero's part of the fidelity of Burrhus.<sup>1</sup> Yet all combined, without hesitation, in asserting that Nero was already willing and even anxious to rid himself of his mother, and was only deterred from at once commanding her death by the assurance of Burrhus that she should be sentenced judicially if the crime were proved against her. Every culprit, it was honestly insisted, might claim a hearing, and above all a parent. As yet there were no accusers, but merely a single informer against her; and he the emissary of a hostile house. Nero acquiesced, heavy perhaps with wine, and unaccustomed to argument.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 20.: "Fabius Rusticus auctor est . . . spe Senecæ dignationem Burrho retentam. Plinius et Cluvius, nihil dubitatum de fide præfecti referunt. *Sane Fabius inclinât ad laudes Senecæ.*" The student of Tacitus will remark the numerous instances in which the author intimates his dislike to Seneca. He could not forgive him for his connection with the monster Nero, who lived to be detested more than all their tyrants by the senate and aristocracy.

This rapid consultation took place that night: the next morning Agrippina was required to hear the charge against her and refute it. Burrhus conducted the examination, and Seneca attended. Burrhus, anxious perhaps for himself, was violent and overbearing. All the spirit of the virago flashed out at once. She, too, spared neither sarcasm nor menaces. It was well, she said, for Silana, the childless, to suggest that she, a mother, had designs against the life of a son; as if mothers could put away their children as easily as strumpets their gallants. It was well for Domitia to vaunt her interest in Nero: she who was adorning her fishponds at Baia, while Agrippina was raising him to the family of the Cæsars, to the proconsular Potestas, to the hope and promise of the Consulship. And then she demanded an interview with the emperor in person, relying on the power of a mother's indignation or despair; and without deigning to assert her innocence, as if distrusting, nor to urge her claims, as if reproaching him, she bluntly required the punishment of her accusers, and the reward of her faithful adherents.

Agrippina defends herself with spirit.

The hardihood of Agrippina was crowned with more success than it merited. The charges against her were declared to be unfounded, and of those whom she denounced as the inventors of the calumny, Calvisius and Iturius were placed in distant confinement, the freedman Atimetus was put to death, while Silana herself was banished. Paris alone escaped free, by the special grace of the emperor, who admired his talents as an actor, and had received him into private intimacy. Rubellius himself, it seems, was not noticed at all. The favour which Burrhus, the blunt uncourtly soldier, still retained, is even more remarkable. Not only were the insinuations levelled on this occasion against him disregarded, but when soon afterwards he was accused, together with Pallas, of intriguing for a Cornelius Sulla, he was allowed to take his place among the judges, and turn the charge against himself into a process against his accuser. Burrhus again, and Pallas

The charges against her are declared unfounded.

under his wing, were triumphantly acquitted, while their assailant Pætus was himself condemned to banishment.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the firmness and moderation of Nero's administration throughout the first model year of his principate; and for some years afterwards it continued to be conducted, for the most part, on similar principles. It was Nero's dissolute amusements. undoubtedly the administration, not of the young prince himself, but of the shrewd and thoughtful men to whom he had given his confidence; and Seneca deserves the praise of abstinence from bloodshed and violence, and a laudable care to retain his patron in the paths of ancient usage. The licence he meanwhile extended to his private amusements may readily be pardoned. If it was impossible to engage the light-minded youth in the details of business, there may have been no better course than to absorb him in frivolous pleasures, which should leave him neither leisure nor inclination to interfere with the government at all. Such seems to have been the view Seneca took of the alternative before him. But in after years the frivolity of Nero, and the vile character of his pastimes, seem to have incensed the Romans against him no less than the tyranny which accompanied them: the dislike with which Seneca is regarded by Tacitus was caused perhaps mainly by the belief that it was he who corrupted the principles of his tender charge, and undermined in him the stern simplicity of the Roman character. The carelessness with which Nero began soon to exhibit himself in the circus and the theatre will appear hereafter; but already in the second year of his reign he condescended to roam the streets disguised as a slave, accompanied by his boon companions, snatching the wares exposed for sale, cuffing the angry owners, and sometimes receiving blows in return.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 23. Faustus Cornelius Sulla was husband of Antonia, and son in law of Claudius, cons. A. U. 805, A. D. 52. *Ann.* xii. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 25. We know not what exaggeration there may be in these stories. When after an evening's debauch Nero appeared next morning without any marks of injury on his visage, it was whispered that he had applied a lotion of sovereign efficacy to his skin, the ingredients of which were indicated with precision. Plin. *H. N.* xiii. 43.

These freaks soon became notorious, and many dissolute youths were encouraged by the example to perpetrate like excesses. But when Montanus, a senator, struck the emperor unawares in one of these nocturnal encounters, and, on discovering him, too openly begged his pardon, he received an order to kill himself. Thenceforth Nero took care to have soldiers always at hand to protect him. This taste for vulgar brawls induced him to foster the passions of the stage, until the licentiousness of the spectators became intolerable; and it was found necessary to expel the histrions, or pantomimic dancers, and to restore the guard, which, from the time of Augustus till recently, had kept the police of the theatres.<sup>1</sup>

A. D. 56.  
A. U. 800.

While such, however, were the early indications of a corrupt and feeble character which the young prince exhibited, to the sorrow of decent citizens and alarm of the wiser and more thoughtful, various incidents in his administration recommended it strongly to different classes of his people. The populace, ever favourably impressed by marks of family affection, were pleased at the respect he had seemed to show to the memory of his predecessor. Though they despised Claudius when alive, they acquiesced in the ascription of divine honours to him after death, and thought it highly becoming in his successor to build him a temple after the manner of his ancestors, and appoint a college of Claudian Flamens from among the highest families of the city.<sup>2</sup> Nor did Nero disdain to recognise the claims of his natural father, while paying these honours to

Consecration of  
a temple to  
Claudius.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus says: "Non aliud remedium repertum est quam ut histriones Italia pellerentur, milesque theatro rursum insideret." The soldiers had been just before withdrawn. The histrions or mimes are to be distinguished from other performers. It was only the former that were expelled; the latter were retained, under the superintendence of a military guard, which Augustus had originally assigned for that purpose.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. ult. The temple of Claudius on the Cælian hill is supposed to have stood on the oblong platform, scarped on three sides, now occupied by the garden of the Passionists, and marked from a distance by a few slender cypresses. Ampère, *Hist. Rom. à Rome*, § 8.

the adoptive. He obtained a statue for Domitius from the senate. For Asconius Labeo, who had been his guardian after his father's death and still survived, he demanded the consular ornaments. This attention to the claims of others was accompanied by modesty in regard to himself. His liberality was eminently conspicuous. To preserve their rank to some impoverished senators, he endowed them with the census which the law required. At the same time he followed the example of Augustus and Claudius in respecting the prescriptions of the state religion. When the temples of Jupiter and Minerva,—two of the cells perhaps of the triple temple in the Capitol,—were struck with lightning, he caused the city to be illustrated, by the advice of the Haruspices. Of this solemn ceremonial the most picturesque feature was a procession of the priests of the various services; the *Salii* bearing the golden shields on their heads; the Vestals guarding the sacred Palladium; the *Galli* who lave in Almo the Mother of the Gods; with the noble Augurs and thrice-noble Flamens, the *Septemvirs* and *Epulones*, and every lesser priesthood girt with the simple cincture of the rustic *Gabii*.<sup>1</sup>

We do not hear, indeed, that Nero took any personal part in the government; and whatever merit there was in his administration must in fairness be ascribed to the ministers rather than to their master. Nor can we give him the lesser praise of deliberately choosing his instruments well, and submitting his own inexperience to their riper judgment. Seneca and Burrhus had been given him by Agrippina. The rare occasions on which the prince appears on the public scene during this period were prepared for him by these advisers, and the kindly acts or sayings imputed to him were doubtless suggested by them.

Favourable  
characteristics  
of Nero's early  
government.

Lucan gives a spirited description of the procession, which no doubt he witnessed himself (*Phars.* i. 592.):

"Tum jubet et totam pavidis a civibus urbem  
Ambiri, et festo purgantes moenia lustro  
Longa per extremos pomeria cingere fines  
Pontifices, sacri quibus est permissa potestas," &c.

Thus much it seems just to detract from the fame of Nero's Quinquennium: nevertheless, setting aside all question of the real authorship of the acts belonging to it, the general course of government deserves apparently the praise it has received. The kindness of *kings upon their coronation day* has passed into a proverb. Little stress need be laid on the gracious promises of Nero at his accession, when words could cost him nothing, and might gain him much. His declarations in favour of justice and generosity were carried out consistently as long as there was no temptation to tyranny. The senate and magistrates were suffered to exercise their functions without control. If he ever interfered within their jurisdiction, it was in the direction of mercy, to overrule harsh sentences, or to mitigate them.<sup>1</sup> Never, however, was there a period more noted for the punishment of great criminals, especially of officers convicted of extortion in the provinces.<sup>2</sup> But all these cases were prosecuted in due course of law; no irregular procedure was allowed even to further the ends of justice; and, above all, the practice of delation was rigidly repressed. This, no doubt, was the circumstance which invested the early years of Nero with their brightest colours. There were no trials on charges of *Majestas*; and Nero showed himself, even to a late period, superior to petty mortifications from raillery and libel.<sup>3</sup> The empire had grown consciously stronger since the time of Tiberius, and could afford to disregard ridicule. Stories were current of the unwonted humanity evinced by this lord of the world, such as was seldom shown by the master of a score of bondmen. When required to set his name to a sentence of death, *Would to God*, he exclaimed, *that I had never learned to write!*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the cases mentioned by Tacitus, *Ann.* xiii. 43. 52.; and again xiii. 27., xiv. 18. 22. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 30. 33. 42., xiv. 18. 26. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 39.: "Mirum . . . . nihil eum patientius quam maledicta et convicia hominum tulisse."

<sup>4</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 10.: "Quam vellem nescire literas." The story is from Seneca, who takes occasion to remind his blushing pupil of it (*De Clem.* ii. 1.): "Ut de

The financial measures of this epoch display, as far as we can trace them, not only a liberality which might be confounded with mere thoughtless profusion, but some indications of a wise and intelligent policy.

*Liberality of  
Nero's financial  
measures.*

Nero inherited from Claudius the best of all legacies to a despot, a full treasury and a flourishing revenue. He could give without borrowing; he could endow without extorting. A donative to the soldiers, the necessary condition of their support, was followed by a largess to the people, prudent, no doubt, but not equally indispensable. Fresh drafts of veterans were established, with the surrender of public domains, in the colonies of Capua and Nuceria. Another measure, of which we should much wish to know the particulars, was the advance, apparently, of certain sums to the treasury, to maintain, as the historian oracularly phrases it, the solvency of the Roman people. We may conjecture that this liberality was meant to relieve the farmers of the tolls and tributes, or other responsible agents of finance. It amounted, we are told, only to forty millions of sesterces; and it is hard to conceive any great public relief being effected by a loan or even a gift of 320,000 pounds sterling.<sup>1</sup> In their excessive jealousy of taxation the citizens had complained that a rate of one twenty-fifth or four per cent. was exacted by the state on the purchase-money of slaves. The buyer of these articles of luxury was in most cases the Roman, the vendor was the subject or foreigner; and when the imperial government transferred the tax from the buyer to the vendor, the multitude were led to suppose that they had actually escaped it, not perceiving that the amount of the rate was still as before levied upon them in the advanced price of the commodity.<sup>2</sup> Nor was it the ruling caste only

*clementia scriberem, Nero Cæsar, una me vox tua maxime compulit: quam ego non sine admiratione et cum diceretur audisse memini, et deinde alijs narrasse,*" &c.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 31.: "Sestertium quadringentis ærario illatum est ad retinendam populi fidem."

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus (l. c.) remarks this consequence: "Specie magis quam vi, quia cum venditor pendere juberetur, in partem pretii emptoribus accrescebat."

towards which this consideration was extended. When the proconsuls and other magistrates abroad were forbidden to exhibit gladiators and wild beasts in their provinces, the restriction must have been meant to relieve the subjects of the state from the burden of providing them.<sup>1</sup>

This gleam of consideration for the interests of a class to whom it was so rarely extended by the Roman statesmen, seems to indicate a change of feeling in the conquerors towards the conquered, which we are prompt to remark, expecting important consequences to follow. But we are still doomed to be disappointed. Meagre and inconclusive are the notices we find regarding the views of the imperial administration. It is impossible to construct from them anything which may be called a policy. We note the glimmer of a great social principle beneath the folds of political history; but in a moment the field of vision is overclouded, and we dare not indulge the speculations which have risen in our minds, lest it should appear that they are founded on a misapprehension of our own, or on a misstatement of our informant. After the financial measures just mentioned, Tacitus proceeds to speak of another, apparently of much greater importance. The circumstance refers to the fourth year of Nero's reign, and is thus stated by the historian, the obscurity or confusion of whose account it may be well to exhibit, to show by a single instance how little precision is to be looked for in the prince of pictorial narrators. So numerous, he says, were the complaints of *the people* against the extortions of the publicans, that Nero actually meditated surrendering all *duties*, and conferring the noblest of all presents on *the human race*. But the senators, with much praise of his liberality, restrained his ardour, by proving that the empire would be dissolved if the imposts by which it was supported should be diminished: for it was clear that if the *duties* were abolished, a remission of *taxes* would be speedily demanded. They showed

His proposal to abolish the *vectigalia*.

A. D. 58.  
A. U. 811.

Tac. l. c.: "Ne quis magistratus aut procurator qui provinciam obtineret, spectaculum gladiatorum aut ferarum, aut quod aliud ludicrum ederet."



that many associations for farming the revenues had been established by *consuls and tribunes of the plebs* at a period when the *Roman people* were most jealous of their liberties: . . . they allowed, however, that it was expedient to put some restrictions on the cupidity of the publicans.<sup>1</sup> The question here arises whether the duties, of which Nero would have made a present to the *human race*, were those which prevailed generally throughout the empire, or whether they refer only to such as were peculiar to the ruling caste of citizens. Undoubtedly the offer, at first sight, seems to be universal; and so it has been generally regarded by the critics, historians, and writers on Roman finance. Yet there are words in the passage which seem to me very clearly to limit its application to the Roman citizens only, the class for whom, according to ideas which had not yet lost their force, the subject races of the empire toiled, untitled and unregarded.

The question must be discussed at greater length. The abolition of the whole system of indirect taxation throughout the empire would indeed have been the conception of a madman. It could only have been effected in company with an immense increase of direct payments, such as the land-tax, poll-tax, and property-tax, at a time when the state has relinquished all claim to the absolute use and possession of its conquered territories. But no such increase, it would seem, was contemplated. Nor, again, is the establishment of such a system of free-trade, by the removal of all imposts on commercial transactions between land and land, consistent with the spirit of the time, and the cherished ideas of antiquity, which were far as yet from realizing an equality of rights among mankind. Doubtless Seneca was in advance of his age; doubtless he would speak even more freely as a philosopher than he would act as

Examination of  
what it really  
imports.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 50.: "Crebris *populi* flagitationibus immodestiam publicanorum arguentis, dubitavit Nero an cuncta *vectigalia* omitti juberet, idque pulcherrimum donum *generi mortalium* daret . . . Plerasque *vectigalium societates* a Consulibus et Tribunis plebis constitutas, acri etiam *populi Romani* tum libertate."

a statesman; yet the rare expressions of political liberality which have been gleaned from his writings would be a very insufficient ground for ascribing to him any profound views on this subject. *Virtue*, he says in one place, *embraces all men together, freedmen, slaves and kings. . . . We are born to a common inheritance. . . . Wisdom invites the human race to live together in amity.*<sup>1</sup> Such common places as these constitute at best but a slender claim to the praise of practical liberalism. It seems therefore impossible to suppose that Nero really meant to remit the whole custom duties of the empire. I would limit the extent of his scheme to a surrender of duties payable on commodities and transactions in Italy, and the colonies of Roman citizens. Such a remission would have had a clear analogy to defend it. From the time of the conquest of Macedonia the land-tax had been remitted to the citizens, though the census or property-tax on moveables, which also bore the invidious name of *tribute*, continued to press upon them. But the popular tribune Metellus Nepos had abolished the indirect taxation of tolls and dues in Italy, and it was with great soreness that the citizen had seen this burden reimposed by Julius Cæsar, and maintained, as a state necessity, by the triumvirs and the emperors. We may easily believe that the young impulsive Nero conceived it worthy of the successor of the tribunes, to abolish once more this detested impost upon the favoured caste; and this was probably as far as his liberality extended. The flourish about *a boon to the human race* was an indiscreet bravado either of the ignorant prince, or of the

<sup>1</sup> Senec. *De Benef.* iii. 18.: "Virtus omnes admittit, libertinos, servos, reges." *Epist.* 95.: "Membra sumus magni corporis . . . . natura nos cognatos edidit" *Epist.* 90.: "Sapientia genus humanum ad concordiam vocat." These and a few more passages, in which God is called our *common parent*, slaves and freemen are said to be *naturally equal*, &c., constitute, I think, the writer's whole claim to the character of a cosmopolite. They are once only faintly echoed by Lucan, *Phars.* i. 60.:

"Tum genus humanum positis sibi consulat armis,  
Inque vicem gens omnis amet."

unreflecting historian. Nero's advisers, indeed, naturally pointed out that the burdens of which the citizens complained had been originally imposed, not by triumvirs and emperors, but by the consuls and tribunes of the free state. Rome in the height of her pride and independence had felt no humiliation in submitting to them. But were her claim to exemption from these dues conceded, she would have a pretence for demanding abolition of the tribute or census also, and for obtaining that complete immunity which was the dearest wish of her indolent selfishness.<sup>1</sup> Nero, whose generosity was a mere impulse, founded on no principle of policy or humanity, was no doubt easily persuaded to desist from his scheme; and perhaps we may trace in the genuine liberality of his advisers, who discouraged such an indulgence to a special class, the wider and wiser views of the sage who presided over them. The project resulted in a few sensible regulations of detail; for making the revenue laws better known that they might be better obeyed; for limiting the claims for arrears; for putting the publicani under stricter supervision; for abolishing a few trivial but vexatious imposts; for relieving the importer of grain from the pressure of certain burdens; and with this view exempting the ships of the corn merchants from the common tax on property.<sup>2</sup>

The salutary regulations here recorded belong to the first three or four years of this principate; but the general improvement of the administration depended on principles which continued to operate through the first half, at least, and in many cases to the end of a reign of more than thirteen years. So long did

The policy of Nero gives satisfaction to the Senate.

provement of the administration depended on principles which continued to operate through the first half, at least, and in many cases to the

<sup>1</sup> It will be seen that I regard the phrase of Tacitus, "donum generi humano," as an incorrect expression. We are not yet in a position to consider whether the times in which the historian himself wrote offered any excuse for this mistake. At a later period the exemption of Italy from the land-tax was annulled, and the whole empire placed on an equal footing in respect of fiscal burdens. Savigny thinks that this took place in the time of Diocletian (see *Vermischte Schrift.* i. 48.), from an obscure passage in Aurelius Victor (*Cæsar* 30.), on the occasion of the permanent establishment of an imperial court and army in Italy.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 81.

Nero persist, under the guidance of trusty counsellors, in maintaining the dignity of the senatorial order, as the highest judicial and legislative tribunal. The position of Seneca and Burrhus in antagonism to Agrippina could only be maintained by upholding the authority of the senate; the activity of which is attested by the number of laws and decrees which at this period emanated from it. The youth and inexperience of Nero, overwhelmed as he was by the weight of affairs which the recent example of his laborious predecessor forbade him to reject, compelled him to rely on these practised advisers; and the more so as the odium which attached to the whole class of the imperial freedmen required him to waive their succour. The dispersion of the secret conclave gave immediate relief to the senate, which breathed more freely, and acted more boldly, when it felt that no private influence stood between it and the throne. It expressed the sense of its recovered liberty, partly by the loudest eulogies of the new reign, partly by renewed activity within the now extended sphere of its operations.<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of a military success in Armenia, it not only saluted Nero as Imperator, and decreed the customary supplications, arches, and statues; but established an annual commemoration of the days on which the victory was gained, the news brought home, and the decree made concerning it. *Were we to thank the Gods*, said C. Cassius, *according to their kindness, the whole year would not suffice us. Let it be at once divided into two portions, one for public affairs, the other for giving thanks for Nero.* Even the irony of a senator who bore the

<sup>1</sup> Hoeck has collected from the Digest the names of certain *Senatusconsulta*; viz. Silanianum, Calvisianum, Memmianum, Trebellianum, and Neronianum, which may be referred to this period. They apply to the treatment of slaves, to adoption, to testamentary trusts, &c. See *Rom. Geesch.* i. 3. p. 356. fol. Nero transferred to the senate a share of the appeals in civil cases, which recent princes (and perhaps Claudius more particularly, in his insatiable appetite for business) had grasped for themselves. At a later period he relinquished the labour and responsibility altogether. Such, at least, seems the best way of reconciling the discrepancy between Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 28. and Suet. *Ner.* 17. See note of Baumgarten Crusius in loc. Suet.

name of a tyrannicide, if irony it were, proved the freedom of speech now permitted to his order.<sup>1</sup>

The ancient usage of the republic still required the prince to take his seat on the tribunal; and there, assisted by his council, Nero, like Claudius before him, listened to appeals from the ordinary courts of justice, and gave final sentence from his own breast. Warned, however, by his predecessor's example, he limited the addresses of the rival pleaders, and checked vague declamation by requiring each point to be separately discussed before opening on another.<sup>2</sup> His judgments were issued always in writing, and after mature deliberation; and in the interval he expected his assessors to give him their opinions separately, from which he made up his own in private, and delivered it as the common decision of the cabinet. It would seem, from this account of his public conduct, that he was strongly impressed with the conviction that he held power on sufferance only; and was not blinded by adulation to the precariousness of his position as the first citizen of an aristocratic republic. But as long as he executed his delegated functions for the common weal of his order, they, on their part, made no inquiry into the privacy of his domestic life. The curtains which the Roman drew across the vestibule of his mansion were a sacred screen, behind which none could enter unbidden. Within that veil the courteous statesman or the bland philosopher might play the tyrant to his slaves, to his children, and to his women. There self-indulgence and debauchery in their grossest shapes sheltered themselves alike from the decrees of the censors, and the murmurs of public opinion. It was not till a later period,

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 18. Baumgarten. Crusius explains him thus: "Er liess die Sache Punkt für Punkt untersuchen:" "productis testibus, libris, aliisque iudicii instrumentis, idque per vices, utraque parte alternatim audita. Hic igitur transitus fuit ad nostrorum iudiciorum (the German) morem ab antiquo, qui observatur in Britannia adhuc terrarum Galliarum subjectis." This, no doubt, is the improvement to which Seneca points in his sneer at the impatience of Claudius: "Una tantum parte audita, sæpe et neutra."

when the fall of Nero dissipated all lingering reserve, that the inner life of the palace was disclosed to the eyes of the citizens, and the process laid bare, step by step, by which he was corrupted into a monster of depravity. Already, beneath the show of care for the interests of the state, he was learning to regard his own safety, his own convenience, as paramount to every obligation, and trying what amount of horrors the world would bear for the sake of his gracious administration.

But Rome was tranquil; the citizens were content; the senate, affecting to speak the voice of the nation, pronounced Nero the best of its princes since Augustus. Affairs might seem to run more smoothly even from the absence of great principles to guide them. Nero differed from all his predecessors in the extent to which he suffered affairs to take their natural course. Julius Cæsar had deliberately overthrown old forms and prescriptions which he felt to be obsolete, confident of the creative force of his own master-genius. Augustus strove to revive the past. Tiberius was content with shaping the present. Caius, awakened in his youthful inexperience to the real character of the station which his predecessors had disguised from themselves and the world, chose rashly to claim for it all the prerogatives which logically belonged to it. Claudius affected, in the narrow spirit of a pedant on the throne, to govern mankind by personal vigilance, as a master governs his household. Nero, at last, or his advisers for him, seems to have renounced all general views, to have abstained from interfering with the machinery of empire, and contented himself with protecting it from disturbance. The tradition of the felicity of these five auspicious years, to which the best of this prince's successors gave long afterwards the palm of virtuous administration, attests the consciousness of the Romans that they were ruled with a masterly inactivity.<sup>1</sup>

The "Quinquennium Neronis."

<sup>1</sup> It was the well-known saying of the Emperor Trajan, fifty years later "Procul differre cunctos principes Neronis quinquennio." Aurel. Victor, *Cæsar* 5., *Epit.* 5.

Great honour is undoubtedly due to the men who actually governed for Nero, that they did so little to abuse their temporary ascendancy. There seems, however, less reason to extend our admiration to Nero himself, or to regard this happy result as the triumph of philosophy over youthful passions, and the fatal sense of irresponsibility. We must rather admit that his reserve was caused by incapacity or indifference, by an engrossing taste for frivolities which belonged to his tender years, or by the dissipation to which his position too naturally enticed him.

## CHAPTER LIII.

NERO'S PASSION FOR POPPÆA SABINA.—INTRIGUES AGAINST AGRIPPINA.—NERO'S MACHINATIONS AGAINST HER UNSUCCESSFUL.—SHE IS FINALLY DESPATCHED BY HIS ORDERS.—SENECA AND BURRHUS IMPLICATED IN THE MURDER.—INSTITUTION OF THE NERONIAN GAMES.—THE LUDI MAXIMI.—NERO'S INSENSIBILITY TO NATIONAL FEELING.—MODERATION IN REGARD TO CHARGES OF LIBEL AND MAJESTY.—DEATH OF BURRHUS.—SENECA SEEMS TO WITHDRAW FROM PUBLIC LIFE.—RISE AND INFLUENCE OF TIGELLINUS.—DEATH OF FLAUTUS AND SULLA.—NERO'S EXTRAVAGANCE AND CRUELTY.—REPUDIATION, BANISHMENT, AND DEATH OF OCTAVIA.—PROSECUTION OF WEALTHY FREEDMEN, DORYPHORUS AND PALLAS.—NERO'S PROGRESS IN LICENTIOUSNESS.—HE EXHIBITS HIMSELF IN THE CIRCUS.—HIS INFAMOUS DEBAUCHERY.—BURNING OF ROME.—PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS.—RESTORATION OF THE CITY.—NERO'S GOLDEN HOUSE.—FURTHER EXACTIONS AND CONFISCATIONS.—CONSPIRACY OF PISO.—ITS DETECTION AND PUNISHMENT.—DEATH OF LUCAN AND SENECA.—PRETENDED DISCOVERY OF THE TREASURES OF DIDO.—DEATH OF POPPÆA.—FURTHER PROSCRIPTIONS.—STORMS AND PESTILENCE.—REFLECTIONS OF TACITUS.—DEATH OF ANNÆUS MELA.—PROSECUTION AND DEATH OF SORANUS AND THRASKEA.—A.D. 58-66. A.U. 811-819.

THE legislation of Nero's principate has been examined, and the character of his civil administration depicted, from the notices of historians and jurists. The materials are slender, and the delineation is necessarily unsteady and superficial. Such is the public history of the times. But we now turn to an intrigue of the palace, a story of domestic hate and private crime, and we find its whole course, and every detail, described to us with the clearest and strongest lines; while to the careful inquirer more darkness really hovers over this picture than the other. A thoughtful reader can hardly peruse a sentence of the *Annals* of Tacitus, his chief guide at this period, without feeling that he is in unsafe hands. The matters of which

Uncertainty of  
the history of  
this period.



his author now treats had for the most part no public bearing; transacted in secret, they could only have been revealed by treacherous, or at least by interested narrators; and it is with vexation, not unmixed with wonder, that we remark the complacency with which he recounts events of which he could have had no certain knowledge, of which false and coloured statements must necessarily have been rife, and can hardly have failed to imbue the representations of the writers from whom he almost indiscriminately drew. *Many persons, says the Jewish historian Josephus, have undertaken to write the history of Nero; of whom some have disregarded the truth on account of favours received from him, others from personal hostility have indulged in abominable falsehoods.* As a foreigner, Josephus was exempt from many of the prejudices of the Romans; he regarded these matters from a more distant and a clearer point of view. Undoubtedly, the particular details of intrigue and crime, on which we are about to enter, must be received with caution and distrust; nevertheless, Josephus himself believes in the poisoning of Britannicus, and the murders, now to be related, of Agrippina and Octavia; the name of Nero is branded with atrocities which can neither be denied nor extenuated.<sup>1</sup> The story must be told as it is delivered to us, and no man will care to mar its horrible interest by scrutinizing step by step the ground on which he is treading.

Since her defeat by Seneca and Burrhus, at the outset of the new reign, the empress-mother seems to have refrained from provoking a further trial of strength; and, possibly, she regained by this prudent reserve a portion of the influence she had forfeited. When, after an interval of almost five years, the curtain again draws up on a scene of the interior of the palace, we find Nero still married but not united, to Octavia, Agrippina watching their connexion with a jealousy which frustrates every attempt to draw him into another marriage, while Acte still retains her

Rise of Poppæa  
Sabina

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* ix. 7 3.

place as the reigning favourite. We find the young and gallant Otho still first of the prince's friends and associates, fascinating his master by his graces, and rising in public honours. Nero is now two and twenty instead of seventeen: in other respects we note little change in the personages or situations of the drama. But a new character now steps upon the stage, destined to work out a startling catastrophe. Poppæa Sabina, the wife of Otho, was the fairest woman of her time, and with the charms of beauty she combined the address of an accomplished intriguer.<sup>1</sup> Among the dissolute women of imperial Rome, she stands preëminent. Originally united to Rufius Crispinus, she had allowed herself to be seduced by Otho, and obtained a divorce in order to marry him. Introduced by this new connexion to the intimacy of Nero, she soon aimed at a higher elevation. But her husband was jealous and vigilant, and she herself knew how to allure the young emperor by alternate advances and retreats, till, in the violence of his passion, he put his friend out of the way, by dismissing him to the government of Lusitania.<sup>2</sup> Poppæa suffered Otho to depart without a sigh. She profited by his absence to make herself more than ever indispensable to her paramour, and aimed, with little disguise, at releasing herself from her union and supplanting Octavia, by divorce or even by death.<sup>3</sup>

It seems, however, that this bold design could only be

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 45. (under the year 811): "Huic mulieri cuncta alia fuere præter honestum animum." There are several busts in existence supposed to represent Poppæa; but their authenticity is very questionable. The features are of infantine grace and delicacy, not unsuited to the soft voluptuousness of the habits imputed to her. See Ampère, *Hist. de Rome à Rome*, § 8. But her images, we are told, were generally destroyed at the death of Nero.

<sup>2</sup> The story is somewhat differently told by our authorities, and even by Tacitus himself in his *Histories* and his *Annals*. In the latter work he speaks, no doubt, from his latest and best information, which agrees with the distich in Suetonius (*Otho*, 8.):

"Cur Otho mentito sit, quæritis, exul honore?  
Uxoris moechus coeperat esse suæ."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 46., A. D. 58, A. U. 811.

effected by the overthrow of Agrippina. If this woman had recovered a portion of her power over her son, she at least retained little of his affections. To control him by fear was no longer possible; an influence once broken could never be restored on the footing of ancient habit. There was hardly a crime of which she was not reputed guilty; there was no excess of which Romans believed her incapable. Murder and adultery were the common instruments of her ambition: in marrying Claudius she had engaged in an act which popular feeling regarded as incest. Indignant and disgusted at her crimes, her debaucheries, and the crimes and debaucheries of her favourites and creatures, hating her as the sister of Caius, hating her as the wife of Claudius, loathing her as the harlot of Narcissus and Pallas, execrating her at last, in the bitterness of their disappointment, as the vile daughter of their noble Germanicus, her countrymen were prepared to believe the rumour that she had tried, as a last device, to entangle her own son in a criminal intrigue with herself.<sup>1</sup> Some, indeed, whispered that Nero had been the first to solicit his mother; but the other story gained more general credence; no one asked whether a woman of fifty could dream of such a conquest over the fairest charmers of the court, or betray her odious secret to those who watched around her. But so nearly was she successful, they went on to aver, that it was with difficulty her arts were frustrated by Seneca; who deterred Nero from the crime, by representing, from the lips of Acte, the shock it would cause to public feeling, and the dangers which might ensue.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 2. (A. U. 812): "Tradit Cluvius Agrippinam," &c. On the other hand: "Fabius Rusticus non Agrippinæ sed Neroni cupitum id memorat. . . . Sed quæ Cluvius eadem cæteri quoque auctores prodidere, et fama huc inclinat."

<sup>2</sup> The strange story told by Dion (lxi. 11.) seems equivalent to a confession that this scandal was not generally reputed worthy of belief: ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο μὲν, εἰς ὃ ἀληθὲς ἐγένετο, εἴτε πρὸς τὸν τρόπον αὐτῶν ἐπλάσθη, οὐκ οἶδα· ἃ δὲ δὴ πρὸς πάντων ὁμολόγηται λέγω, ὅτι ἐταίραν τινα τῇ Ἀγριππίνῃ ὁμοίαν ὁ Νέρων δι' αὐτὸ οὗτο ἐς τὰ μάλιστα ἠγάπησε, καὶ αὐτῇ τε ἐκείνη προσπαίζων, καὶ τοῖς

However this may be, and whether or not Agrippina, the writer of a scandalous chronicle herself, has suffered from the lying tongues of enemies of her own, Poppæa was now engaged with her in open strife, and one or the other must perish in the contest. Poppæa had so far succeeded as to get her lover to contemplate marriage with her, while he still shrank from the preliminary steps. Of Octavia, indeed, neither one nor the other took account. It was Agrippina's anger, Agrippina's power, that Poppæa sought to overcome. She treated Nero as a child controlled by an unreasonable parent; she excited him to rebel against undue authority; made him ashamed of his subservience, and alarmed at the state of dependence in which she represented him as lying. He was no emperor, she said; he was not even a free man. Finally, she persuaded him that his mother was conspiring against him: the charges triumphantly rebutted four years before, were repeated with more success: for Nero began now to feel an interest in believing them, and he had learnt, in the exercise of his power, that it was possible to condemn the suspected without bringing them face to face with their accusers.<sup>1</sup>

Poppæa intrigues against her.

No intrigue of the palace could be supposed complete at this period, unless Seneca was its instigator or accomplice; and accordingly the sage is himself accused of counselling the dreadful crime which has now to be related. The first attempt on Agrippina's life,

Nero contemplates the murder of his mother.

*ἄλλοις ἐνδεικνύμενος, ἔλεγε οὐ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ δμολοίη.* Lucan, towards the end of his poem, speaks with true Roman indignation of the incest permitted to the Parthians, in which he may possibly have had regard to stories nearer home (viii. 406.):

"Damnat apud gentes sceleris non sponte peracti  
 Edipodionias infelix fabula Thebas:  
 Parthorum dominus quoties sic sanguine mixto  
 Nascitur Arsacides! cui fas implere parentem  
 Quid rear esse nefas!"

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 1. Such was the dread in which Nero at this time held his mother, that he entertained thoughts (so at least we are assured) of quitting Rome, divesting himself of power, and returning to a private station at Rhodes. Suet. *Ner.* 34.

as recounted by Tacitus, is one of the darkest scenes of his long tragedy. That it is true in the main, we have at least no reason to question; but Suetonius and Dion have each added details, not wholly consistent with one another, which may serve to remind us that the particulars of such deeds could seldom be accurately known, and how much scope there was for invention and embellishment in the obscurity of contemporary history. Nero, it seems, full of fear or disgust, long avoided all private intercourse with his mother, and recommended her to withdraw to a suburban residence. But this was not enough to reassure him. There was no intention of bringing her to trial: open violence against her could not be ventured: against poison she was guarded by her own caution, and the fidelity of her attendants: the statement that she had fortified herself by antidotes, is one of the vulgar fictions of antiquity, which modern science scarce deigns to refute, yet it is not impossible that she allowed such a rumour to be spread as a measure of precaution. Again, after the mysterious death of Britannicus, a second catastrophe of the kind in the imperial family would have excited terrible suspicions. Among the prince's intimates was one Anicetus, a freedman of the court, but advanced to the command of the fleet at Misenum, who had formerly been his preceptor, and had personal grounds of hostility to Agrippina. This man explained to his eager patron the mechanism by which a vessel might be constructed, to fall in pieces at a given signal in the water. In this Agrippina should be invited to embark; the disruption of the treacherous planks might be imputed to the winds and waves, and then her pious son might erect a temple to his victim, and satisfy the unconscious world of his dutiful affection.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 3. Suetonius says that the first design was to crush Agrippina under the falling roof of a chamber prepared on shore for the purpose; but that of this Agrippina was forewarned. *Ner.* 34. Dion assures us that Poppæa and Seneca, not Nero, first took the idea of the treacherous ship from some machinery of the kind in the theatre, and applied it to the projected destruction of Agrippina. But this strange mechanism occurs again in

Such a vessel was accordingly prepared, fitted up sumptuously, and assigned for the conveyance of Agrippina from Bauli, where she would land from Antium, to Baia, whither she was invited by Nero, at the celebration of the five days' festival of Minerva in the month of March. At this period, the beginning of spring, the fashionable season of the baths began; and Nero pretended to open it with an act of reconciliation with the parent from whom he had been too long estranged. The empress left her own vessel at Bauli, as anticipated, and was received on the beach by Nero; but apprised, as was believed, of some intended treachery, she declined to mount the fatal bark, and insisted on completing the transit to Baia in a litter. But there every apprehension was removed by the caresses lavished upon her. The banquet was protracted to a late hour, and when at last Nero took leave of her with the blindest demonstrations of affection, she no longer hesitated to enter the vessel which had been sent to Baia to receive her. The weather was fair, the sky brilliant with stars, the gay company of the baths, turning night into day, lingered on the beach as she embarked. There was nothing strange or unusual in such a nocturnal excursion. But no sooner had the rowers put off from shore than the canopy beneath which Agrippina reclined with her ladies gave way under the weight of lead with which it had been loaded, and crushed one of her attendants. At the same instant the bolts were suddenly withdrawn. In the confusion, however, the mechanism failed to act; the sailors tried, by rushing to one side of the vessel, to overturn or sink it, having means at hand to make their own escape. This too was unsuccessful, but Agrippina and her companions were immersed in the water, and one of the women, named Acerronia, hoping to save herself by exclaiming that she was the empress, was beaten with oars and drowned. Agrippina, with more presence of mind, kept silence, and swam, or floated on fragments of the wreck, till

Failure of an attempt to destroy her at sea

Dion's history (lxxvi. 1.), under the reign of Severus. Reimar refers to a coin of that emperor on which it is represented. See Vaillant, *Nouv. Imp.* ii. 230.

picked up by boats from the shore; but she too was struck once on the shoulder. Carried to a villa of her own on the banks of the Lucrine lake, and now fully conscious of the treachery from which she had so narrowly escaped, she felt in her retreat that the only chance of safety was to pretend entire ignorance of it. Without delay she despatched her freedman Agerinus to Nero, to announce her happy escape from a lamentable accident, to entreat him to calm his own impatience, and defer visiting her till she had tended her wounds, and rested from her fatigues.

Of the failure Nero was already made aware. He had watched the vessel quit the shore of Baiæ: perhaps in the

Further machi-  
nations against  
Agrippina.

moonlight he had witnessed the catastrophe; at all events, long before the arrival of Agerinus, he was apprised that Agrippina had escaped, wounded, but with life; and he knew too well that she was no longer deceived by his caresses. He believed, in his terror, that she was prepared to arm her slaves, to call upon the soldiers, to appeal to the senate and people against him. Burrhus and Seneca were at hand. Tacitus leaves it uncertain whether, as some believed, they were actually concerned in the plot. His silence may be taken, perhaps, as so far

Complicity of  
Seneca and  
Burrhus.

favorable to them. When, however, they came into the prince's presence, and heard his confession of guilt and earnest demand for advice, there was first a long silence; they may have despaired of dissuading; possibly they thought that there now was no alternative: either the son or the mother must perish. At last Seneca turned to Burrhus and asked whether the soldiers should be directed to kill her. Burrhus replied that the soldiers could not be trusted against a daughter of Germanicus: *Let the admiral, he said, be required to fulfil his promise.* . . . . *Be mine the deed,* replied Anicetus; whereupon Nero exclaimed with transport that this was the first day of his Imperium; that he owed the boon to a freedman. When Agerinus presently appeared, Anicetus let a dagger be dropped at his feet, then seized him as an assassin, and loaded

him with chains ; intending, after the murder of Agrippina, to declare that she had attempted to assassinate the emperor, and, failing in her design, had put an end to her own existence.

The Baian palace and the Lucrine villa lay perhaps not many furlongs apart, and these incidents, crowded within a narrow space, had all occurred in the course of a few hours. As soon as Agrippina's disaster was known to the residents of the coast, they rushed

Murder of  
Agrippina ef-  
fected.

to the beach, thronged the moles and terraces and leapt into the boats beneath them, to ascertain what had befallen her. The shore gleamed with innumerable torches, and resounded with cries, and vows, and agitated murmurs. When it was known that she had escaped, the multitude hurried to her place of refuge in a tumult of joy. Arrived at the doors, they found them beset by the armed band of Anicetus. Placing a guard at every entrance, the freedman had made his way into the villa, and required the slaves to lead him into their mistress's presence. There lay the matron on a couch, with a single attendant, by the light of a single lamp, waiting anxiously for her messenger's return. Reassured for a moment by the enthusiasm of the populace, she sickened over the long delay ; and when the cries of the multitude sank into silence, too surely presaged the end which was to follow. The slave herself slipped at last out of the room, and as she exclaimed, *Do you too desert me ?* she beheld Anicetus and his soldiers enter. She had scarce time to bid them return with a favourable account of her health to their master, when one of them struck her on the head with a stick, and the rest rushed upon her, and despatched her with many wounds, she exclaiming only, as she lay prostrate before them, *Strike the womb which bore a monster !*<sup>1</sup>

In this account, says Tacitus, all writers in the main agree. As to what is reported to have followed there was no such general agreement : we may believe it if we will. Perhaps he would wish us to believe, what he dares not himself assert, that Nero came

Brutal be-  
haviour of  
Nero.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xiv. 3-8.



in person to examine the corpse of the mangled old woman, and coolly praised its beauty to his attendants.<sup>1</sup> The remains were burnt the same night without ceremony; nor were they even entombed till some of Agrippina's domestics placed the ashes in a decent sepulchre beside the road to Misenum. One of her freedmen, Mnester, slew himself upon it; a token of fidelity which deserves at least to be recorded to her credit. Through a long career of ambition and wickedness she had never blinded herself to the fate which too surely awaited such a position and such schemes as hers. When she consulted the Chaldeans about her son's fortunes, they had warned her that he was destined to reign himself, and then to slay her. *Let him kill me*, she had answered, *let him but reign.*<sup>2</sup>

Then began, if we may believe some writers, the torments of mind which from thenceforth never ceased to gnaw the heart-strings of the matricide: the Furies shook their torches in his face; Agrippina's spectre flitted before him; the trumpet, heard at her midnight obsequies, still blared with ghostly music from the hill of Misenum.<sup>3</sup> However they might falter in their hopes or fears about the future, the ancient moralists clung fondly to the conviction that successful crime meets a sure punishment in this world.<sup>4</sup> We shall read how, many years later, Nero shunned the sight of Athens, as the city of the vengeful Eumenides, and shrank, in conscious guilt, from initiation in the Mysteries; yet, I fear, too much reliance must not be placed on these popular imaginations, for we are informed

Nero attempts  
to justify him-  
self to the sen-  
ate.

<sup>1</sup> So also Dion, lxi. 14.: *οὐκ ἔδειν ὅτι οὕτω καλὴν μητέρα εἶχον.*

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 9.: "Occidat dum imperet."

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 34.: "Sæpe confessus exagitari se materna specie, verberibusque Furiarum ac tædis ardentibus." Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 10.; Dion, l. c.; Stat *Sylv.* ii. 7. 118.:

"Pallidumque visa  
Matris lampade respicis Neronem."

<sup>4</sup> Juvena<sup>1</sup>, xiii. 2.:

"Prima est hæc ultio, quod se  
Judice, nemo nocens absolvitur."

that he ventured himself to enact the part of Orestes; nor would Lucan have alluded to the fate of Clytæmnestra, had the murder of Agrippina been known to have left a sting in his patron's breast.<sup>1</sup> We are assured, however, and so far no doubt truly, that the first impulse of the self-accuser, was to fly from the scenes which could not *change their faces like the courtiers to flatter him*, and retire to Naples, from whence he despatched a letter to the senate, composed, as usual, by Seneca, explaining the deed he had perpetrated. This mis-sive asserted that his mother had conspired against his life; that her creature had been found with a weapon in the audience chamber; that, in confusion at the discovery, she had perished by her own hand. *I am scarcely yet assured of my safety*, exclaimed the monster: *It is no satisfaction to me*, he added, *to have escaped*.<sup>2</sup> The disaster in the bay he represented as an accidental shipwreck. He declared, however, that the death of this imperious woman might be accepted, at all events, as a public benefit; and he enumerated her acts of arrogance and ambition, ascribing to her fatal influence many of the worst excesses of Claudius. The explanation bordered too closely on a justification: it was taken as a murderer's confession of guilt, veiled by the ingenuity of a hired advocate. But to put the best face on their master's enormities was recognised as the duty both of the minister and the courtiers. While the senators heaped flatteries and felicitations upon him, they contrived to sell their suffrages for some acts of favour. Some exiles were recalled, particularly noble women, who were said to have suffered through the influence of Agrippina; the ashes of Lollia Paulina were

<sup>1</sup> Lucan, vii. 777.:

"Haud alias, nondum Scythica purgatus in ara,  
Eumenidum vidit vultus Pelopeus Orestes."

Comp. Suet. *Ner.* 21.; Dion, lxi. 22. According to Feuerbach (*der Vatican. Apollo*), the Apollo Belvedere, which may have stood in Nero's villa at Antium, is not the Dragon-slayer, but the Averter of the Furies. Undoubtedly the posture is not that of an archer.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 11. Quintilian quotes from the letter these words: "Salvum nec esse adhuc nec credo nec gaudeo." *Inst. Orat.* viii. 5. 18.

restored to her native country, and a tomb permitted to be raised over them.

Nevertheless, the crime of which the wretched youth was conscious, seemed so far to transcend the worst deeds of the Roman princes, that Nero still apprehended, when reflection returned, a burst of indignation and even violence. The demeanour of his facile nobles reassured him beyond all expect-

His triumphal  
entry into  
Rome.

tation. Still he hesitated to show himself. His advisers urged him, as his best security, to affect the confidence of innocence. Still trembling, still blushing, he entered Rome in the face of day. Seneca, Burrhus, even the hardy Anicetus, might be amazed at his glowing reception. The senators came forth in their festal robes to meet him: their wives and children were arranged in long rows on either side of the way; the streets were thronged with seats raised against the houses, to accommodate the multitude of spectators as at a triumphal procession. And a triumph indeed it was: Nero had conquered Rome, and now led its people at his chariot-wheels to the Capitol. There he offered thanksgivings to the Gods, and descended again only to fling himself, in insolent security, into every form of monstrous dissipation, from which the last remains of reverence for a mother had hitherto served to withhold him.<sup>1</sup>

So secure, indeed, was the monster of his subjects' servile devotion, that he could now venture to despise the grim raillery with which the populace assailed him; for it was more in jest than indignation that they hung the sack, the instrument of death for parricide, about his statues, placarded the walls with the triad of matricides, *Nero, Orestes, Alcæon, the three men that slew their mothers*, and teased him by pretending to denounce the perpetrators of these offensive ribaldries.<sup>2</sup> A discreet neglect soon caused this

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xiv. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lxi. 16.:

Νέρων Ὀρέστης, Ἀλκαίων, μητροκτόνοι.

Comp Suet. Ner. 3.:

"Quis negat Æneæ magna de stirpe Neronem?  
Sustulit hic matrem, sustulit ille patrem."

petty annoyance to cease. The current of men's excited imaginations was speedily diverted by the celebration of magnificent games, and the reflections of the jeering populace were turned from their ruler's cruelty to the indecency with which he descended himself upon the stage, and contended in feats of skill with the singers and musicians. Already at an earlier period, in his passion for charioteering, he had erected a circus in his own gardens on the Vatican, and there he had held the whip and reins in the presence of applauding spectators admitted by invitation to his private entertainments. His tutors, it was said, had conceded him this indulgence to keep him from the more heinous impropriety of singing and playing; for he threatened to come forth like Apollo, a Roman, as he remarked, no less than a Grecian divinity, and claim as an honour for himself the admiration which was allowed to be honourable to the Deity. But he would be now no longer thus restricted. He resolved to exhibit himself as an actor; and still shrinking from the reputed enormity of appearing before promiscuous multitudes on the public stage, he devised a new festival, which he called the Juvenalia, to be held within the precincts of the palace. The prince himself was the hero of this solemnity. Arrived at the age of manhood, his beard was clipped, and the first tender down of his cheek and chin enclosed in a golden casket, and dedicated to Jupiter in the Capitol.<sup>1</sup> This ceremony was followed by music and acting; men of all ranks and in great numbers

Nero gratifies  
the populace  
with shows.

Institution of  
the Juvenalia.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lxi. 19. There may be some question about the exact period of the institution of the Juvenalia. Tacitus mentions it under the year 812, but he does not expressly state that it was then instituted, for which, however, we have Dion's authority. The ceremony of first cropping the beard was more properly performed in the twentieth year (Suet. *Calig.* 10.); and if Nero was born, as I suppose, in October, 790, this would bring the date to 810 or 811. Suetonius and Dion tell a story, which I reject without hesitation as worthless, that Nero caused his aunt Domitia to be poisoned with a pretended medicine, from mere caprice, because, being sick, she had said she could now die without regret, having lived to see her darling's beard clipped. Hitherto at least Nero's enormities were not without a motive.

were admitted as spectators; illustrious Romans were bribed to exhibit themselves as dancers and singers; grave senators and stately matrons capered in the wanton measures of mercenary buffoons and posture-makers. The degradation to which Nero thus constrained his noblest subjects seems, in the view of the philosophic Tacitus, to deepen the shades which hung over the fame of the matricide. The historian proceeds to describe, as an enhancement of his excesses, the establishment of what we should call a public garden round the basin of Augustus beyond the Tiber, where drinks and viands were distributed to the populace, and all comers, gentle and simple, received a *ticket for refreshments*, which good men exchanged for these vile commodities because they were compelled, the profligate from depraved inclination. Henceforth vice, he says, walked abroad more heinous and more shameless than ever. These promiscuous assemblages of men and women of all ranks together, corrupted the manners of the age more than any cause that could be named.<sup>1</sup>

Last of all, to crown the universal degeneracy, when his people had been sufficiently corrupted, Nero descended himself upon the stage, with the lyre in his hand, which he was seen to tune with nervous solicitude before commencing his performance. His voice was husky, his breath was short, and all the appliances of his art were unavailing to correct their defects.<sup>2</sup> But of this he was much too vain to be conscious. Nevertheless, to silence envious detractors, a troop of soldiers was kept always in attendance, and at their head stood Burrhus himself, disguising the sob of shame with ejaculations of applause. A band of young nobles, entitled Augustani, was enrolled to applaud the performance, to praise the divine beauty of the prince, and the divine excellence of his singing.<sup>3</sup> Doubtless the

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 15.: "Nec ulla moribus corruptis olim plus libidinum circumdedit quam illa colluvies."

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lxi. 20.: Φόνημα βραχὺ καὶ μέλαν. Lucian, *Neron.* 7.: Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ὀλίγον καὶ οἶκ ἀποχρῶν πον ὀή.

<sup>3</sup> Nero, it seems, had been charmed at Naples by the performance of pro

verses already quoted from Seneca were frequently in their mouths. Nero himself was a verse maker also. His claims to poetical merit were, as might be expected, meagre, and he so far distrusted himself in this art that he entertained many rhymers about him, whose business it was to catch each pretty turn of phrase or thought that fell from him, and weave it into verse as best they might. *You may trace, says Tacitus gravely, in the poems of Nero the manner of their origin: for they flow not, as it were, with a current and inspiration of their own: they have no unity of style or meaning.*<sup>1</sup> In private, Nero, as a philosopher's pupil, affected some interest in philosophical discussions, the common pastime of educated men in his time; and he suffered himself to be attended, after the fashion of the day, by the professed sages of Greece and Rome. It is said however that he had no real sympathy with their pursuits; he enjoyed a boyish gratification in setting them to wrangle together. Agrippina, indeed, is accused of having dissuaded him from the study, as unfit for a king of men.<sup>2</sup> For painting and sculpture, as Grecian arts, he may have acquired the taste of a virtuoso, and the charms of Grecian architecture incited him to magnificence in building.<sup>3</sup> But his true delight was in the shows of the theatre and the circus. In 818 he instituted games called after himself Neronia, to be conducted in the Greek fashion, and to recur periodically like the Olympian.<sup>4</sup> They embraced musical and gymnas-

*Institution of  
the Neronia.*

fessional *claqueurs* from Alexandria, and made them his model. Suet. *Ner.* 20.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 16.: "Non impetu et instinctu, nec uno ore fluens." Suetonius (*Ner.* 52.) holds that he did compose his verses himself, and appeals to the manuscripts he had seen of them.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 52.

<sup>3</sup> The statues of the Apollo Belvedere, whether it be an original work of Grecian art, or a Roman copy (it seems not yet to be decided whether the material be the marble of Paros or of Carrara), and the Fighting Gladiator, were found in the ruins of Nero's palace at Antium. Of Nero's taste for building I shall speak hereafter. On the subject of the former work, see above, p. 125, n.

<sup>4</sup> Dion, lxi. 21.: Suet. *Ner.*: "Instituit quinquennale certamen primus orn-

tic contests, as well as chariot-racing. For games of athletic skill he erected a gymnasium, this designation, as well as the contests themselves, being altogether new to the Romans. It is curious to read in Tacitus how the old-fashioned citizens, still a numerous and respectable body, murmured at the introduction of these foreign customs, which they connected with the reputed profligacy of Grecian morals, and how the rising generation defended them.<sup>1</sup> No page of our author reads more like a declamation of our own day. Nero caused himself to be inscribed on the list of Citharædi, and obtained the prize as the best of lyrists without an antagonist; for all the rest were declared by the judges unworthy even to compete with him. No reward was given for eloquence; but Nero again was pronounced to be the conqueror. The first public display of Lucan's poetical genius was made on this occasion; when he came forward to sing the praises of the prince who had made him his companion and assistant.<sup>2</sup> On the whole the first celebration of the Neronia was dignified and imposing; for the low buffoonery of the histrions, the favourites of the baser sort, was excluded from this Hellenic festival. It was remarked that from this time the Greek fashions, long denizenized in Naples and the cities of Campania, obtained more and more favour with the Roman voluptuaries; the loose Greek robes in which the spectators were enjoined to array themselves, to favour the illusion of the spectacle, were retained in common use, and displaced, in spite of the sneer of Augustus, the toga of the world's masters.<sup>3</sup>

nium Romæ." According to Eckhel (*Doctr. Numm.* vi. 264.) these games continued to be repeated as late as the time of Constantine.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 21, 22. The contempt of the Romans for the gymnastic entertainments of Greece is marked by Lucan, vii. 270:

"Graüs delecta juvenus

Gymnasiis aderit, studioque ignava palæstræ."

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius, *vii. Lucan.*

<sup>3</sup> Tac. l. c. The chlamys, a loose and short cloak, and crepis, a kind of sandal, were distinctive articles of Grecian costume, already much in use among the Roman sojourners at the Greek cities of Italy. See note of Lipsius on Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 21.

Our authorities, especially Suetonius and Dion, abound in details of the grandeur and extravagance of the shows with which Nero astonished his people, more particularly on the occasion of celebrating the *Ludi Maximi*, as he styled them, for the eternity of the Roman Empire. The most remarkable of these exhibitions was perhaps that of an elephant which descended from the cornice of the amphitheatre to the arena upon the tight rope,—it does not appear how it first reached that elevation,—with a Roman knight on his back. The distribution of precious objects,—gold, jewels, tissues, pictures, animals, and finally ships, houses, and estates,—exceeded the wanton liberality of Caius. Nero followed the Roman tradition in constructing an amphitheatre for the display of his own elegant spectacles;<sup>1</sup> but he amazed and mortified them by excluding, in the spirit of Greek humanity, the combats of gladiators, and by refusing to sacrifice the life even of condemned criminals. Yet his scruples were those of the man of art, rather than the man of feeling. His Roman entertainments were served after the bloodier fashion of his own countrymen. In the course of his reign he is said to have produced not less than five hundred senators and six hundred knights arrayed for combat, though evidently their contests were not meant to be mortal. While the populace exulted in the descent of their magnates into the arena, Nero himself was better pleased when he prevailed on them to compete on the stage in music, and reduced what at other times had been an occasional sally of vanity to a regular practice. Foreign spectators were more affected than either the prince or his people, at beholding beneath their feet a Paulus, a Mummius, a Scipio, and a Marcellus, whose fathers' trophies were still conspicuous in the streets, whose fathers' halls and temples

Increasing extravagance of the shows. The *Ludi Maximi*.

<sup>1</sup> The theatres adapted to scenic representations, in which the Greeks were content to exhibit such spectacles, were incapable, of course, of receiving the crowds of the great metropolis; but Nero, like many great builders before him, was content with a temporary edifice of wood.



were the proudest monuments of the city.<sup>1</sup> Nero was the first of the emperors who seems, with some emotions of sensibility, to have been wholly devoid of national prejudices. Coarse and unamiable as the national feeling of the Romans was, the world had no better security against wanton and unmitigated tyranny.

We have now reached a period when the chief of the Roman state, the representative of its most illustrious families, is found altogether insensible to the principles which had carried her in triumph through every combination of foreign and domestic peril.

Nero's insensibility to national feeling.

The announcement of such a fact may induce us to pause in our narrative, and estimate, as we best may, the circumstances of the times which made such a phenomenon possible. Was the gay and thoughtless, but instructed and accomplished, prince before us the impersonation of the general feeling, or an exception to it? He was partly both. His want of sympathy with antiquity is to be ascribed partly to his education, which was exceptional, partly also to his position, in which he represented the lowest class of citizens, and reflected their temper and instincts. The teaching of Seneca, which drew all its interest from the Greek philosophy, was alien from the old Roman sentiments. His doctrines were essentially cosmopolite. He sought to refer questions of honour and justice to general and eternal principles, rather than solve them by the test of precedents and political traditions. The educated men of the later Republic, as well as of the early Empire, had opened their arms wide to embrace these foreign speculations; and whether they had resigned themselves to Epicurism, as was the fashion under Julius and Augustus, or had cultivated Stoicism, which was now more generally in vogue,

The result of his education in the principles of the Stoic philosophy.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 12.; Dion. lxi. 17.: Καὶ ἐδακτυλοδείκνουν γε αὐτοὺς ἀλλήλοις, καὶ ἐπέλεγον, Μακεδόνες μὲν, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ Παύλου ἑκγονός· Ἕλληνες δὲ, οὗτος τοῦ Μομμίου· Σικελιώται, ἴδετε τὸν Κλαύδιον· Ἡπειρώται, ἴδετε τὸν Ἀππίον· Ἀσιανοὶ, τὸν Δούκιον· Ἰβήρες, τὸν Πάππιον· Καρχηδόνιοι, Ἀφρικανόν· Ῥωμαῖοι δὲ πάντας.

they equally abandoned the ground of their unpolished fathers, which asserted the pre-eminence of patriotism above all the virtues, the subordination of every claim of right and duty to national interest and honour. But men cannot rule the world in the same spirit in which they conquer it. Humanity in its widest sense, as sympathy with man, follows, by the condition of our nature, on the sense of ease and security. We shall presently see, indeed, the Roman Stoics suddenly awaking from this dream of philanthropy, and flinging themselves again, with passionate disappointment, upon the narrower interests which constituted the strength of their fathers; trying indeed, but feebly and with no consistency, to connect the duties of the Roman with the universal spirit of rectitude and holiness. But as yet, Stoicism, in the ranks of Roman society, was merely a speculative creed; and the habit now prevalent there, of speculating on the unity of mankind, the equality of races, the universality of justice, the subjection of prince and people, of masters and slaves, of conqueror and conquered, to one rule of Right, tended undoubtedly to sap the exclusive and selfish spirit of Roman antiquity.

It was by his position, however, at the head of the dissolute democracy of Rome, that Nero was taught more especially to divest himself of the ideas and motives which seemed to become the offspring of the Domitii and the Julii. The eminence, indeed, to which he was born might itself preclude him from ever imbibing them. The men by whom his infancy had been surrounded were slaves and freedmen, chiefly of Greek extraction, men whose lessons of life and manners were pointed doubtless with many a gibe at the decrepitude of Latium and Sabellia, with proud laudation of the genius of Hellenic culture, which had survived so many conquests and captivities, and laid its invisible yoke on the necks of the world's masters. The society of the palace displayed, in striking colours, the intellectual superiority of the Greeks; and Nero was led, by all his early tuition, to regard intellectual polish as the true end of civilization. But the em-

2d. Of his position at the head of the Roman democracy.

peror, moreover, was the representative of the Roman populace; of that hybrid multitude of the circus and the baths, which owed no fealty to the traditions of the forum and the camp. These were the natural supporters of his tribunitian power, while the nobles, the true blood of Rome, might be regarded as his hereditary enemies. Even the names of his predecessors, Tiberius and Caius, might remind him of the tribunes of two centuries before, the champions of the plebs against the optimates. We may almost imagine, that in this prevalence of personal over family appellations, there lingered yet a reminiscence of the popularity of the Gracchi.<sup>1</sup>

It would appear, indeed, that while the nobles had no cause of quarrel against their prince, but for the offence he may have given to antique prejudices, they allowed themselves to reflect on his character and administration in terms that could not fail to make a breach between them. Scandalous as the vices and the amusements of Nero had now become, monstrous as were the crimes he had perpetrated within the sphere of his own family, his government was still conducted on wholesome principles, the co-ordinate powers of the state flourished under his tolerant protection, the magistrates were held in honour, the senate bore something more than the mere semblance of authority. The state was prosperous, the laws were respected, public criminals were punished, virtue and moderation were recognised as claims to reward. Under such circumstances, the canker of internal corruption, the absence of high principles, might be concealed from the eyes of ordinary observers; and it may be doubted whether all the philosophy of Rome could furnish one man wise enough to look beneath the surface, and detect the symptoms of national decay which really lurked there. The instincts of Christianity alone could

Nero's temperate proceedings in cases of Majesty and libel.

<sup>1</sup> The indignant allusion of Lucan to the Drusi and Gracchi, and to the supposed exultation of their shades at the success of the Cæsar: an usurpation, is not uninteresting (*Phars.* vi. in fin.):

“Vidi ego lætantes, popularia nomina, Drusos;  
Legibus immodicos, ausosque ingentia Gracchos.”

indicate the disease, at the same time that they afforded the remedy. We must allow, then, that justice as well as prudence should have repressed the selfish jealousy of the nobles; and taught them at least to tolerate the ruler who deserved well of the republic. But it would seem that they had no such self-control. In the year 815, the turning point, as it is commonly regarded, of Nero's public administration, a prætor named Antistius, who already, as tribune of the plebs, had shown little disposition to confine himself within the limits of his functions, thought fit to compose verses against the emperor, and to recite them in a company of knights and senators. The law of Majesty, under which such indecent raillery would have met with speedy punishment, had been set aside: Nero piqued himself on his generous discouragement of the informers. But the flatterers of power were ever prompt to seize an opportunity for courting it. It was easy to represent that the safety of the prince required protection to his dignity. A few years only of exemption from the shame and peril of delation had sufficed to blunt the sense of its enormities, and the demand now made by the courtly Capito for reviving of charges of Majesty, seems to have been hailed by all with blind precipitation. The senate assented without serious opposition from any of its members. But Capito required, further, that the action of the law should be retrospective. The ribaldry of Antistius, he protested, was not only shocking, but dangerous. The safety of the state, not of the emperor only, required an example to be made. The stretch of legal principle for his punishment was well deserved; and it was for once only. Many acquiesced in these violent proceedings, so at least they pretended, to give the prince an opportunity of gracefully absolving his maligner by the exercise of the tribunitian veto. A consul designate, inspired by this refined notion of flattery, proposed that the culprit should be stripped of his prætorship and scourged to death, after the ancient manner. The senators ratified the outrageous sentence with headlong ardour; but Pætus Thræsea alone, one of the few honest men among them, re-

fused to concur in it, and while he tempered his vote with much praise of the emperor, and invectives against his defamer, invoked the milder punishment of exile with confiscation. This temperate counsel had a great effect on the impulsive assembly, ever prone, as we have seen, to the most sudden conversions, and devoid, it would seem, of those convictions and principles, the possession of which is among the most essential qualities of a deliberative body. It was determined to proceed no farther without first ascertaining the emperor's real wishes; and this precipitate flattery ended in placing him in the disagreeable position of deciding as a judge on a question of his own personal dignity. Nero hastened to refer the affair again to the senate, not omitting, however, to claim some credit for allowing it to absolve the criminal. After some further discussion, Thrasea's firmness prevailed; and the senators generally acquiesced in his vote for the minor punishment.<sup>1</sup> Patient as the emperor had shown himself in the case of a libel against his own person, he bore, as might be expected, with equal composure, the publication of scandalous writings against the senate. When a certain Fabricius Veiento was accused of putting forth offensive libels against the fathers and the pontiffs, Nero, to whom the cognisance of the charge was referred by appeal, again declined to interfere. It was not till a fresh indictment was presented against the culprit, and he was declared to have trespassed on the imperial prerogatives, and even to have sold magistracies and other appointments, that the chief of the state could be induced to summon him before his tribunal. Veiento was banished from Italy; his books, the original subject of complaint, were ordered to be burnt, and it was declared criminal to read or possess them. As long as this interdict lay upon them they were sought for with ardour; but when it was shortly afterwards removed, they soon ceased to attract curiosity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 48. For the turbulent character of this man, called elsewhere (*Ann.* xiii. 53.; xvi. 10.) L. Vetus, see xiii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 50.: "Conquisitos lectitatosque, donec cum periculo parabantur, mox licentia habendi oblivionem attulit."

To those who, with the bitter experience of past years, foresaw that the first step, however hesitating, in the direction of tyranny, must rapidly lead to a revival of its pristine terrors, even these indications of imperial jealousy might serve as a warning. But the young Cæsar's progress in dissipation and expense gave nearer cause for apprehension. The wasteful extravagance of his first eight years could not have been maintained with pure hands, had he not found in the coffers of his predecessor the accumulated treasures of a reign of carefulness and moderation. Though no friendly voice has deigned to signalize the economy of Claudius, this fact seems alone sufficient to establish it, and to add another to the various circumstances which impugn the common notion of his imbecility, and the unchecked rapacity of his ministers. But the descent from dissipation to extravagance, from extravagance to want, from want to violence and tyranny, was inevitable. It could only be a question of time. The profusion of the prince would surely grow with indulgence; his treasury must stand always empty, and unlimited power would not long be baulked of the means of replenishing it. Such was the gloomy prospect before the nobles, when, the first to apprehend as the first to feel the tyranny of their autocrat, they saw with dismay the death of Burrhus and the removal therewith of the strongest bulwark against the encroachments of unthrifty despotism. Rumours of poison were whispered among them, and symptoms were reported which gave colour to the suspicion. Nero, it was related, had repeatedly come to the sick man's bedside, to inquire after his health; but he could extort from him no thanks for this solicitude, no frank avowal of his sufferings, but only the dry answer, *I am doing well.*<sup>1</sup> But, however this may be, neither symptoms nor rumours had so much effect on the general belief as the apprehensions excited by the character of the personages between whom Nero divided the military command which had reposed in the hands

Death of Burrhus ascribed to poison.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 51.

of Burrhus. Fenius Rufus was timid and indolent, ready to please either prince or people by any base acquiescence: but the wickedness of Tigellinus was more active; already infamous as the partner of his master's debaucheries, he became the worst adviser of his tyranny, and the willing instrument of his cruelties.<sup>1</sup> Such were the ministers to whom Nero instinctively resorted, a bad man and a weak man; the one to contrive crimes, the other to sanction them. And at this moment he might have a special motive for ridding himself of a brave and honest adviser; for he was meditating a divorce from Octavia, which Burrhus sturdily opposed as unjust and impolitic. When urged by the emperor to accede to it, he had bluntly replied (such at least was the reply the Romans delighted to ascribe to him): *If you dismiss the daughter of Claudius, restore at least the empire which was her dowry.*<sup>2</sup>

The death of Burrhus helped to break down the influence of Seneca also. This result, however, flowed in a great measure from the blind jealousy of the nobles themselves. It was natural that they should regard as an upstart the provincial, the sophist, the son of the grammarian: they might cavil at the liberality of his views, and impugn his influence as pernicious. From them, probably, came the accusations which were now heaped on the surviving guardian of Nero's innocence, and which Nero showed himself little anxious to baffle. The riches Seneca had acquired were imputed to him as a crime; it was insinuated that the frugal sage had amassed them to hatch treason and corrupt the populace. It was pretended moreover that he vaunted himself the prince's master in eloquence and

Seneca attempts to withdraw from public life.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c. Dion, lxi. 13. This seems to have been the first occasion of dividing the prefecture between two, the plan recommended by Mæcenas according to Dion (lii. 24.): τῶν δὲ ὅτ' ἐπὶ πέντε δὲ τοὺς ἀρίστους τῆς περὶ σε προσηρᾶς ἀρχεῖν.

<sup>2</sup> Both Dion and Suetonius ascribe the death of Burrhus more confidently to poison. The former writer remarks the rude freedom of speech in which the prefect indulged (lxii. 13.).

poetry, disparaging at the same time the excellence he could not hope to rival in music and charioteering. Nero's petty and vindictive spirit was an instrument easily played upon. Seneca was not blind to the shy consciousness which shunned his presence. Fear and habit alone continued to preserve his life. Now was the time to take the course which he had long meditated, as the means of escaping from danger. He pleaded age and ill health, and demanded leave to withdraw from court; at the same time he offered to relinquish the wealth which rendered him, as he knew, most obnoxious. Such tokens of distrust alarmed Nero. He set himself to caress and cajole; his blandishments were fascinating, but his entreaties were in fact commands; and Seneca found his escape cut off, without being for a moment deceived as to the imminence of his peril. Muttering to himself or his friends the wisest maxims of his school, he renounced all outward show, either of wealth or influence, and pretended to devote himself more earnestly than ever to philosophic abstraction.<sup>1</sup>

Although the ostensible authority over the prætorians might be divided between Rufus and Tigellinus, it was not long before the entire confidence of the emperor was given to a single favourite. Rufus, indeed, Fatal influence of Tigellinus. owed his elevation primarily to the good-will of the populace, to whom he was endeared by the liberality in dispensing their dole of grain without making a profit himself; he had also been admitted to the friendship of Agrippina; and on both these accounts became an object of suspicion to Nero. But his colleague, a man of obscure birth and of no pretensions to distinction or popularity, was better fitted to obtain a tyrant's confidence. This confidence once acquired he sought successfully to keep by humouring the prince's passions, and plunging him into crimes on the plea of safety and necessity.

The first victims to this man's intrigues were Plautus and

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 53-56. The fears of Seneca and the artifices of Nero are set forth in a dialogue between them. Our dramatic fabulist never wears the historian's veil more loosely than in this scene, which assuredly was never acted, and still less could have been reported.



Sulla, personages of high rank and consideration, of whom Nero, as the favourite knew, was painfully jealous. Rubellius Plautus, whose relation to the imperial family has been before noticed, was generally respected for his character; his name was connected accordingly with the plot which Silana had ventured to impute to Agrippina; and recently on the appearance of a comet which was supposed to portend the fall of the reigning prince, it was to him that they had turned their eyes as the fittest and most natural successor.<sup>1</sup> Nero had recommended his kinsman to remove from Rome to his estates in Asia; and here Plautus had resided since 813 with his wife and a modest retinue of slaves, abstaining from all participation in affairs. Still Nero watched him with anxiety, while Tigellinus continued to insist upon the birth, the wealth, and the reputation of the exile, and the proximity of his retreat to the armies of Syria. It was determined in secret conclave that his life should be taken, and for this purpose a centurion with sixty soldiers, under the orders of an eunuch of the palace, was despatched from Rome. Sulla, meanwhile, had been removed to Massilia: he was poor while Plautus was rich; he was despicable in character, while Plautus was highly esteemed; but the nobility of his descent and the name of the great dictator could be objected against him, and the Germanic legions, it was thought, might possibly attach themselves to him. Such were the alarms of the unwarlike stripling, who kept a handful of guards in his service only by largesses and caresses.<sup>2</sup> Sulla's fate was soon decided. It required but

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 19. xiv. 22.: "Quasi jam depulso Nerone, quisnam deligaretur anquirebant; et omnium ore Rubellius Plautus celebrabatur."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 57.: "Propinquo huic Orientis, illi Germaniæ exercitus . . . erectas Gallias ad nomen dictatorium." The Narbonensis, as has been remarked more than once in the course of this history, was closely connected with the old senatorial party under Pompeius, Domitius, and Fontellus. It is curious to find this connexion again referred to, after all the pains the Cæsars had taken to undo it. It is not impossible that the democratic emperor may have been reminded of it by the recent attempt of Gætulicus to assert his independence in that quarter.

six days for Nero's myrmidons to reach the coast of Gaul, and the exile was already slain and his head brought to the emperor, while the murderers of Plautus were still on their journey. As soon as it was known in the city that this precious life was also in danger, some of his kinsmen hastened to advertise him, and their warnings, with exhortations to resist and dare the worst, reached him before the messengers of death arrived. It seems strange, indeed, that the victim should have made no effort to escape or to resist.<sup>1</sup> All Asia lay before him for flight: the legions of the East were commanded by Corbulo, whose fame made him odious to the emperor. But Plautus was unmoved: whether he despaired of escaping or defending himself, or was actually weary of the suspense of his position, or whether he hoped by submission to avert the confiscation of his patrimony, he calmly pursued his exercises and studies, and was found at last by his assassins unrobed for the games of the palæstra. The eunuch looked on while the centurion struck the victim's head off. When the trophy was brought to Rome, Nero is said to have exclaimed, that he was now free to effect his marriage with Poppæa, without fear of a rival to profit by the public commiseration for Octavia. But he pretended to be delivered from two dangerous adversaries, and required the senate to congratulate him, and decree a thanksgiving for the state preserved and a revolution averted.<sup>2</sup>

Thus at the close of the eighth year of his principate did Nero exhibit himself, almost without disguise, as a vulgar tyrant, timid and sanguinary, cutting off one by one the most

<sup>1</sup> Many of my readers will remember Gibbon's remark, and the striking note appended to it: "To resist was fatal; and it was impossible to fly. . . . Under Tiberius a Roman knight attempted to fly to the Parthians. He was stopped in the straits of Sicily; but so little danger did there appear in the example that the most jealous of tyrants disdained to punish it." See Tac. *Ann.* vi. 14. Nevertheless the explanation must be felt to be unsatisfactory. I can only refer, in addition, 1. to the gross apathy with regard to death in which the Romans were now generally sunk; and 2. to their singular abhorrence of exile among strangers.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 57-59.

Further development of Nero's cruelty.

eminent around him in station or virtue. From this time no senator could fail to see that his own life hung only on the caprice of a master, and of the creatures who surrounded him. It was impossible for him to impose on himself, any more than on the prince, by the abject servility of his adulation. Yet having once devoted himself to soothing the monster by caresses, all his moral courage deserted him; condemned by his own conscience, he had no prop to lean on; there seemed no other course for him but to repeat and daily increase the dose of flattery, to crouch more obsequiously under every act of cruelty and oppression; only to hope that his own turn of suffering might come the last. Seneca's influence was gone. It is some satisfaction to believe that the crimes which followed were neither suggested nor excused by this preacher of expediency; and we may hope that, at last, when his doctrines were reproved by the result, he learnt to detest the subterfuges under which he had sheltered his own dereliction from honesty and virtue. The tyrant's passions now ranged unrestrained. The crime he had long prepared was about to be consummated. To the child-wife to whom he was united, he never felt nor pretended attachment. Their cohabitation had been brief and barren. Octavia was too artless to raise any obstacle to his licentious amours. Yet, as the daughter of Messalina, even her existence would remind him of the crimes which had raised him to power; as the child of Claudius, the people, with their usual caprice, might lavish upon her the favour they had withheld from her father. To these obvious motives for jealousy was added the fierce ambition of Poppæa, who demanded of her lover the last proof of his devotion. Still some pretext was necessary, and the barrenness of the deserted wife was alleged as a reason for repudiating her. She was required to remove from the palace; but at the same time the house of Burrhus and the estates of Plautus were, with a show of liberality, assigned to her. The marriage with Poppæa followed only twelve days later. The intruder was now in a position to destroy

the victim she had injured. She contrived an accusation against her of adultery with a slave; her maids were tortured to extort evidence of her guilt; and Tigellinus paid court to the reigning favourite by presiding at the foul examination. Well did he earn the scathing sarcasm which clings like the shirt of Nessus to his name.<sup>1</sup> Yet the pretended revelations thus odiously obtained hardly gave a colour to the harsh measure of sending her to a place of custody in Campania; and when the populace, excited by such great and unmerited misfortunes, murmured against the decree, Nero found it necessary to recall her. Thereupon the citizens rushed tumultuously to the Capitol, to sacrifice to the national divinities; they overthrew all the statues of Poppæa within their reach, while they crowned Octavia's with flowers. They crowded about the palace, and filled its courts: the emperor dispersed them with a military force, and replaced the images of his paramour. Yet he dared not persist in this defiance: trembling and irresolute, he neither dared to retain Poppæa in the palace, nor could he determine to restore Octavia to her place and rights. If, while still absent in Campania, her name alone sufficed to raise a tumult, what, he asked, might be the effect of her actual return to the city? But the charges hitherto made against her had failed of reasonable proof: even if proved, an intrigue with a slave deserved, in Roman eyes, neither the name nor punishment of treason. Another charge must be invented, another connexion, more capable of such an imputation, must be fabricated. Nero had long loathed the sight of Anicetus, the contriver of his mother's murder. Strange to relate, he induced him, by extraordinary promises, to avow an amour with the wretched princess. For the present he must be banished, for appearance' sake, to an island; but he should reap ample rewards at a later period. This confession was enough. A charge not of adultery, but of Majesty, was founded upon it; for the captain of the fleet was capable of guilty aspirations; and, with additional in-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 60. Dion, lii. 13.

Her banishment,

sults to her outraged innocence, Octavia was imprisoned in Pandateria. Familiar as the Romans had now become with the banishment of grave and noble matrons, they were not insensible to the cruel aggravations of her lot. The Cæsarean princesses who had thus suffered before her, the Julias and Agrippinas, had at least attained the strength and fortitude of mature years; *they had seen some happy days*; they had the consolation, for such it was regarded in the creed of Paganism, of reflecting in their sorrow that they had had a portion, at least, of the common enjoyments of life. But to Octavia her marriage had been no other than a funeral: led as she was to a house where everything was funereal and fatal; where her father, and soon afterwards her brother, had been poisoned; where a maid had become more powerful than her mistress; where a paramour had supplanted the lawful spouse; lastly, where she had been branded with a crime more hateful to her than the worst of deaths.<sup>1</sup>

The poor child had not yet attained her twentieth birthday, when, encompassed by soldiers and centurions, she augured too surely that the days of her existence were numbered. Still clinging with agony to life, she proclaimed in vain that she was now no more than Cæsar's widow, no more than his sister, and invoked the names of their common kindred, the offspring of Germanicus, the name of Agrippina herself, during whose power her union, if unhappy, had at least been protected. After a few days she was seized and bound, and her veins opened with the knife; she fainted, and the blood refused to flow; she was finally stifled by the fumes of a warm bath. Her head was severed from her body, and carried to the cruel Poppæa. Vows and sacrifices were offered to the gods by a decree of the senate; and so, says the historian, we are henceforth

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 63.: "Nuptiarum dies loco funeris fuit, deductæ in domum in qua nihil nisi luctuosum haberet, erepto per venenum patre et statim fratre: tum ancilla domina validior; et Poppæa non nisi in perniciem uxor in nupta; postremo crimen omni exitio gravius."

to understand, without special mention, that whenever any atrocious barbarity was perpetrated by the emperor, the triumph of his personal selfishness was celebrated with the same ceremonies as had once signalized the victories of the Roman people.

Nero had now cleared away all partners or rivals of his power in his own family. He remained alone, the last of a race which he was not destined to perpetuate. Nevertheless, his causes of apprehension were not removed by these hideous massacres. He had exchanged the jealousy of a kinsman for the enmity of the whole world. He turned from nobler victims to the vain and wealthy freedmen of his own household. Doryphorus, the secretary of the palace, was put to death for the opposition he had presumed to offer to the nuptials of Poppæa; unless, indeed, the riches he had amassed in the imperial service were the real cause of his destruction, as of that of Pallas, for whose natural death, aged as he now was, the prince was tired of waiting.<sup>1</sup> The wealth of Seneca, also, for he still had the reputation of wealth, tempted Nero's cupidity; and he listened eagerly to accusations of conspiracy which the flatterers of power contrived to forge against the fallen minister. But the charge against him in connexion with the illustrious Piso was at least premature; it was triumphantly rebutted, and the prince acquiesced reluctantly in his escape for a season. The man of peace was provoked at last to self-defence. Piso, awakened to his danger, embarked soon afterwards in a real conspiracy, and we shall have reason to suspect that Seneca himself was not unconnected with that formidable enterprise.<sup>2</sup>

Prosecution of wealthy freedmen, Doryphorus and Pallas.

Charge against Seneca rebutted.

The prodigality of the emperor's pastimes was thus driving him to the sanguinary measures by which tyrants fill their coffers; and the discovery how easy was the process, how submissive were the victims, prompted him to indulge his passions without restraint. His licentiousness became

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

now as reckless as his cruelty. He had sunk already to the degradation of singing and playing in public; but there was still a lower depth which his abandoned tastes and thirst for vulgar admiration tempted him to fathom. As a child his talk had been of the Greens and Blues; his counters had been cars of ivory. The passion, checked by his preceptors, had been cherished up to manhood, and since he had become his own master he had thrown off gradually all restraint in indulging it. From his private circus in the gardens of the Vatican, from the arena of Grecian colonies in Campania, he descended at last to the Circus Maximus at Rome, and, placing a freedman in the imperial tribune to fling the kerchief for a signal, drove his chariot victoriously round the goal, before the eyes of 200,000 citizens. The rabble greeted him with delight; so soon had they forgotten their sympathy with Octavia; so heedless were they of the shame of their country. The senators clapped their hands reluctantly, shuddering the while at the downfall of ancient principles, and trembling at every shout for their own lives and fortunes.<sup>1</sup>

Nero drives his chariot in the Circus Maximus.

Nero had proposed at this period to visit Greece and Egypt, but, when he renounced this intention, he assigned as a reason his people's wish to retain him among them as the leader of all their amusements. Possibly they apprehended,—so completely did they now regard the emperor's presence as the pledge of their subsistence,—that in his absence the regular supplies of the city would be impeded or withheld.<sup>2</sup> It was this general conviction of the necessity of the Prince to the Subject, that assured him of their protection, and made him so formidable to the helpless senate. To attempt the life of Cæsar, tyrant and monster though he might be, was

Nero's presence at Rome desired both by the populace and the senate.

A. D. 63.

A. U. 816.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 22. The date of this odious exhibition cannot be fixed precisely. It must have been later than the institution of the Neronia in 813, and before 817, from an anecdote in Tacitus. (*Ann.* xv. 44.)

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 36.: "Talia plebi volentia fuere, voluptatum, cupidine, et quæ præcipua cura est, rei frumentariæ angustias, si abesset, metuenti"

an outrage on the lives and fortunes of the people whose existence was bound up with his. Distracted by apprehensions on either side, the senators knew not whether to wish for their master's absence or his presence among them; but in Rome he was at least the guardian of public tranquillity, and this tranquillity, by his name, his guards, or his largesses, he contrived successfully to maintain.

Never, on the other hand, were the citizens so good-humoured, as when they saw their prince enjoying himself among them. The prince too, on his part, wished it to appear that he was never so happy as when exhibiting his private pleasures to the eyes of his people. The banquets he gave were no longer to be hidden in the recesses of the palace. In the Campus Martius, in the Circus Maximus, in the theatres and other open places, a series of entertainments rapidly followed: and not here only, but in every public spot in the city, the emperor's table was spread from day to day, and all the world was welcome to see him dine, if not to partake of his dinner. Nor were gluttony and drinking the only intemperance he thus shamelessly practised and more shamelessly displayed. To such degradation had he reduced the citizens, that they were not offended by the most naked exhibitions of wantonness. Infamous debauchery publicly encouraged by Nero. Whatever allowance we may make for the indignant exaggerations of later moralists, or for the prurient imaginations of the narrators, it seems impossible to question the fact of the prostitution he encouraged, ordered, and even compelled. To Tigellinus was ascribed the most monstrous of all his inventions. On one occasion, a table was spread for the emperor and his guests on a raft in the Basin of Agrippa, and numerous vessels, decked with gold, silver, and ivory, attended with the materials and ministers of the repast. The colonnades which encircled the water were filled partly with invited spectators; but certain places were reserved for women of all ranks, even for matrons and virgins, who were surrendered to them without reserve. Finally, one day Nero, who had already thrown off all restraints of decency and



self-respect in his own person, went through the marriage ceremony, arrayed in veil, necklace, and girdle, before the priests and soothsayers, with the vilest of his male associates.<sup>1</sup>

Let this suffice:—such things have occurred, perhaps, in other times and other places; perhaps they have been recorded by historians as well as satirists: but the foul annals of the period before us have attained an unfortunate distinction from the genius which has been engaged in illustrating them. While the world endures, the iniquities of Nero will retain their pre-eminence in infamy, and it will be equally impossible to recount them at length, or to pass them over in silence.

But in the midst of these horrors, which steeped in the same fearful guilt the people and the prince together, Providence was preparing an awful chastisement; and was about to overwhelm Rome, like the Cities of the Plain, in a sheet of retributive fire. Crowded, as the mass of the citizens were, in their close wooden dwelling-chambers, accidents were constantly occurring which involved whole streets and quarters of the city in wide-spreading conflagrations, and the efforts of the night-watch to stem these outbursts of fire, with few of the appliances, and little perhaps even of the discipline, of our modern police, were but imperfectly effectual. But the greatest of all the fires which desolated Rome was that which broke out on the 19th of July, in the year 817, the tenth of Nero, which began at the eastern end of the Circus, abutting on the valley between the Palatine and the Cælian hills.<sup>2</sup> Against the outer

Great conflagration in Rome.

<sup>1</sup> The reader may compare for himself Tac. *Ann.* xv. 37.; Suet. *Ner.* 27-29.; Dion, lxi. 15. It is not worth while to point out some apparent discrepancies, or suggest possible exaggerations, especially in Dion's account: *καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν παντὶ τῷ βουλευμένῳ σχεῖν ἦν θέλειν· οὐ γὰρ ἐξῆν αὐταῖς οὐδ' ἓνα ἀπαρνησασθαι*: which is followed by a trait of nature which redeems it from utter incredibility: *ᾧδισμοί τε καὶ πληγαὶ καὶ θόρυβοι . . . καὶ ἄνδρες τε ἐκ τοῦτων συχνοὶ ἐφθάρησαν*. Modern writers, as usual, have taken the most unfavourable view, and have supposed the entertainment in Agrippa's Basin to have been open to all the world.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 38.: "Initium in ea parte Circi ortum quæ Palatino Cælio

walls of this edifice leaned a mass of wooden booths and stores filled chiefly with combustible articles. The wind from the east drove the flames towards the corner of the Palatine, whence they forked in two directions, following the draught of the valleys. At neither point were they encountered by the massive masonry of halls or temples, till they had gained such head, that the mere intensity of the heat crumbled brick and stone like paper. The Circus itself was filled from end to end with wooden galleries, along which the fire coursed with a speed which defied all check and pursuit. The flames shot up to the heights adjacent, and swept the basements of many noble structures on the Palatine and Aventine. Again they plunged into the lowest levels of the city, the dense habitations and narrow winding streets of the Velabrum and Forum Boarium, till stopped by the river and the walls. At the same time another torrent rushed towards the Velia and the Esquiline, and sucked up all the dwellings within its reach, till it was finally arrested by the cliffs beneath the gardens of Mæcenas. Amidst the horror and confusion of the scene, the smoke, the blaze, the din, and the scorching heat, with half the population, bond and free, cast loose and houseless into the streets, ruffians were seen to thrust blazing brands into the buildings, who affirmed, when seized by the indignant sufferers, that they were acting with orders; and the crime, which was probably the desperate resource of slaves and robbers, was imputed by fierce suspicions to the government itself.<sup>1</sup>

que montibus contigua est . . . simul coeptus ignis . . . longitudinem Circi corripuit." In the second clause the word Circus evidently means the edifice so called, and, accordingly, I give the same interpretation to it in the first. But no part of the Circus can properly be said to adjoin the Palatine and the Cælian; and I think it possible that in the first passage Tacitus means, not the building, but the quarter of the city which went by the name of Circus Maximus. Dion. Hal. (iii. 68.) describes the Circus and its exterior galleries: *ἐξωθεν περὶ τὸν ἱπποδρόμον ἑτέρα στόα μονόστεγος ἐργαστήρια ἔχουσα ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ οἰκῆσεις ὑπὲρ αὐτή.*

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Nec quisquam defendere audebat, crebris multorum minis restinguere prohibentium, et quia alii palam faces jaciebant atque sibi auctorem

At such a moment of sorrow and consternation, every trifle is seized to confirm the suspicion of foul play. The flames, it seems, had subsided after raging for six days, and the wretched outcasts were beginning to take breath and visit the ruins of their habitations, when a second conflagration burst out in a different quarter. This fire commenced at the point where the Æmilian gardens of Tigellinus abutted on the outskirts of the city beneath the Pincian hill; and it was on Tigellinus himself, the object already of popular scorn if not of anger, that the suspicion now fell. The wind, it seems, had now changed, for the fire spread from the north-west towards the Quirinal and the Viminal, destroying the buildings, more sparsely planted, of the quarter denominated the Via Lata. Three days exhausted the fury of this second visitation, in which the loss of life and property was less, but the edifices it overthrew were generally of greater interest, shrines and temples of the gods, and halls and porticos devoted to the amusement or convenience of the people. Altogether the disaster, whether it sprang from accident or design, involved nearly the whole of Rome. Of the fourteen regions of the city, three, we are assured, were entirely destroyed; while seven others were injured more or less severely: four only of the whole number escaped unhurt.<sup>1</sup> The fire made a complete

The fire bursts out a second time.

casse vociferabantur, sive ut raptas licentius exercerent seu jussu. Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xvii. 1.), Dion (lxi. 17, 18.), and Suetonius (*Ner.* 38.) attribute the fire to Nero's orders without hesitation, a view which generally recommended itself to the ancients.

<sup>1</sup> The three quarters which are said to have been destroyed must have been the Circus Max. (xi.), the Palatium (x.), and Isis and Serapis (iii.). I must question, however, the entire destruction of the great edifices on the Palatine: the temple of Apollo is mentioned only two years later by Suetonius (*Ner.* 25.), and the Sibylline oracles kept in it (comp. Amm. Marcell. xxiii. 8.) were consulted immediately afterwards. The destruction of the Palatine library in the fire of Commodus, a hundred and fifty years later, is mentioned by Galenus (*De Compos. Medicam.* l. 1.). Pliny speaks, however, of the temple of the Palatium, dedicated to Augustus by Livia, as consumed, *H. N.* xii. 42. The seven quarters partially injured appear to have been, first the Aventinus (xiii.), Piscina Publica (xii.), Via Sacra (iv.), Caelimontana (ii.), and Forum Romanum

clearance of the central quarters, leaving, perhaps, but few public buildings erect even on the Palatine and Aventine; but it was, for the most part, hemmed in by the crests of the surrounding eminences, and confined to the seething crater which had been the cradle of the Roman people. The day of its outburst, it was remarked, was that of the first burning of Rome by the Gauls, and some curious calculators computed that the addition of an equal number of years, months, and days together, would give the complete period which had elapsed in the long interval of her greatness.<sup>1</sup> Of the number of houses and insulæ destroyed, Tacitus does not venture to hazard a statement; he only tantalizes us by his slender notice of the famous fanes and monuments which sank in the common ruin. Among them were the temple of Diana, which Servius Tullius had erected; the shrine and altar of Hercules, consecrated by Evander, as affirmed in the

(viii.); yet the Capitoline was certainly untouched, and there is no reason to believe that the temples and basilicas which encompassed the forum suffered. In the second fire the Via Lata (vii.) and a great part of the Circus Flaminius (ix.) were devastated. The four which wholly escaped were the Transtiberina (xiv.), the Esquilina (v.), the Alta Semita (vi.), and the Porta Capena (i.). See Bunsen's *Rom.* i. 191. The nine days' duration is proved, not from the historians (Tacitus notes only the six days of the first fire), but by an inscription, Gruter, 61. 8. (Hoeck, p. 374. note). The great fire of London lasted only four days, and swept an area of 436 acres; while the space through which this conflagration raged, though with less complete destruction, must have comprised at least one third of Rome, or not less than three times that extent. Comp. Lambert's *Hist. of London*, ii. 91.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 41.: "Fuere qui adnotarent xrv. Kal. Sext. principium incendii hujus ortum quo et Senones captam Urbem inflammaverant: alii eo usque curæ progressi sunt ut *totidem annos menseque et dies* inter utraque incendia numerent." The interpreters have given up generally the attempt to explain this obscure passage; but the principle of Grotefend's suggestion, which I take from Ritter's note, seems peculiarly happy. Between 19 July, 364, the received date of the Gaulish fire, and 19 July, 817, are exactly 453 years; and the addition of 417 years, 417 months, and 417 days, completes this period wanting about 40 days. If, on the other hand, we suppose these calculators to have taken 363 for the date of the Gaulish fire, the interval will be 454 years, and 418 years + 418 months + 418 days = 454 years — 8 days only.

tradition impressed upon us by Virgil;<sup>1</sup> the Romulean temple of Jupiter Stator, the remembrance of which thrilled the soul of the banished Ovid;<sup>2</sup> the little Regia of Numa, which armed so many a sarcasm against the pride of consuls and imperators; the sanctuary of Vesta herself, with the Palladium, the Penates, and the ever-glowing hearth of the Roman people. But the loss of these decayed, though venerable, objects was not the worst disaster. Many an unblemished masterpiece of the Grecian pencil, or chisel, or graver,—the prize of victory,—was devoured by the flames; and amidst all the splendour with which Rome rose afterwards from her ashes, old men could lament to the historian the irreparable sacrifice of these ancient glories.<sup>3</sup> Writings and documents of no common interest may have perished at the same time irrecoverably; and with them trophies, images, and family devices. At a moment when the heads of patrician houses were falling rapidly by the sword, the loss of such memorials was the more deplorable; and from this epoch we may date the decay, which we shall soon discover, in the domestic traditions of the nobles.

Nero was at Antium, nor did he quit that favourite residence till apprised that the flames had reached the long colonnades with which he had connected the mansion on the Palatine with the villa of Mæcenas. It would seem that with due energy the progress of the fire along these galleries might have been cut off; but

The fire imputed by the populace to Nero himself.

<sup>1</sup> Virg. *Æn.* viii. 270.:

"Hanc aram luco statuit, quæ maxima semper  
Dicetur nobis, et erit quæ maxima semper."

<sup>2</sup> Ovid. *Trist.* iii. 1-49.:

"Adjice servatis unum, pater optime, civem . . . .  
Me miserum! vereorque locum, venerorque potentem."

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 38.: "Domus priscorum ducum hostilibus adhuc spoliis adornatæ, Deorumque sedes, . . . et quicquid visendum et memorabile ex antiquitate duraverat." Tac. *l. c.*: "Monumenta ingeniorum antiqua et incorrupta:" which Lipsius characteristically interprets of the autograph writings of the ancients, so vainly regretted by reviving letters.

the attempt was either not made, or made too late, and the flames, it is said, extended to the palace, and involved it, or at least some portion of it, in the general ruin.<sup>1</sup> The injury indeed to Nero's own dwelling was greatly exaggerated, possibly to make him appear to have suffered equally with his people. Altogether, however, the disaster was the greatest that had befallen the city, since the era of the Gaulish invasion. The mansions of the nobles were scathed, but the cabins of the populace were annihilated. The prince was popularly held responsible for every public calamity; and when the rumour, not improbable in itself, was circulated, that Nero had watched the conflagration from the towers of his villa, and chaunted the *Sack of Troy* to his own lyre, the sufferers were prone to believe that he had commanded the city to be fired, and forbidden the flames to be extinguished.<sup>2</sup> Once, it was said, when the line before quoted by Tiberius, *After my death perish the world in fire*, was recited to him; *Nay, in my lifetime*, had been his fiendish reply. Another suspicion, hardly less horrible, prevailed, that he had caused the destruction of the ancient city, not out of pure wantonness, but in order to rebuild it more magnificently, and dignify the new Rome with his own name.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, whatever favour the populace had hitherto entertained towards

<sup>1</sup> The words of Tacitus are these (c. 39.): "Eo in tempore Nero, Antii agens, non ante in urbem regressus est quam domui ejus, qua palatium et Mæcenatis hortos continuaverat, ignis propinquaret. Neque tamen aisti potuit quin et palatium et domus et cuncta circum haurirentur." I have expressed in the text the qualification I must put on these words. There must have been a colonnade or gallery across the Velia to connect the buildings on the Palatine and the Esquiline, probably a viaduct, like the bridge of Caius across the Velabrum, with carriage-way underneath. This construction was possibly of wood. The palace on the Palatine may have been injured, but it could not have been destroyed without the destruction of every other edifice on that hill. That the other portion of the palace, the villa of Mæcenas on the Esquiline, wholly escaped seems certain from the anecdote which follows.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 38.: "Hoc incendium ex turre Mæcenatiana prospectans, lætusque flammæ ut aiebat pulchritudine, ἀλλοτρὶς Ἰλίου in illo suo scenico habitu decantavit." Comp. Dion, lxi. 29.; Juvenal, viii. 219.

<sup>3</sup> Suetonius, a faithful expounder of popular traditions, more than insinuates

the chief who flattered and amused them, they were now fiercely exasperated. It was to little purpose that he provided accommodation for the shelter of the houseless multitudes and supplied with anxious care their most pressing necessities.<sup>1</sup> It was in vain that the gods were soothed with holocausts, and the Sibyls' books consulted for expiations; that vows were offered to Vulcan, Ceres, and Proserpine, and Juno propitiated by processions of Roman matrons. The people continued to mutter their dissatisfaction with increasing significance; it was necessary to divert their suspicions by offering them another victim; and Nero seems to have saved himself at last, by sacrificing the little band of alien sectaries, already the objects of their hatred and reviling, to whom the vulgar gave the name of *Christians*.<sup>2</sup>

*This name, says Tacitus in a famous passage in his Annals, was derived from one Christus, who was executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate. This accursed superstition, for a moment repressed, spread again, not over Judea only, the source of this evil, but the City also, whither all things vile and shameful find room and reception. Accordingly, he adds, those only were first arrested who avowed themselves of that sect, afterwards a vast number discovered by them, who were convicted, not so much on the charge of burning, as for their general hatred to mankind. Their execution was accompanied with mockery.*

this charge: "Quasi offensus deformitate veterum ædificiorum, et angustii flexurisque vicorum, incendit urbem." *Ner.* 38.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Solatium populo exturbato et profugo campum Martis et monumenta Agrippæ; hortos quin etiam suos patefecit; et subitaria ædificia extruxit quæ multitudinem inopem acciperent: subvectaque utensilia ab Ostia et propinquis municipiis; pretiumque frumenti minutum usque ad ternos nummos. Quæ, quanquam popularia, in irritum cadebant, quia pervaserat rumor, ipso tempore flagrantis urbis inisse eum domesticam scenam, et cecinisse Trojanum excidium, præsentia mala vetustis cladibus assimulantem."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44.: "Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos . . . quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus Christus," &c. I shall enter in another place into the question, who were the persons to whom the vulgar applied this name? In the text I confine myself as closely as possible to the words of Tacitus.

*They were wrapped in skins to be torn in pieces by dogs, or crucified, and thus set on fire to serve as torches by night. Nero lent his own gardens for the spectacle, and gave a chariot race on the occasion, at which he mingled freely with the multitude in the garb of a driver, or actually holding the reins. The populace, however, turned with their usual levity to compassion for the sufferers, justly odious though they were held to be; for they felt that it was not for their actual guilt nor the common weal that they were punished, but to glut the ferocity of a single tyrant.<sup>1</sup>*

This horrid sacrifice, so deeply impressive to the minds of sixty generations of Christians, ruffled then for a moment the feelings of Roman society, and excited perhaps in the heart of the historian, impassive as he The rebuilding of Rome. constrains himself to appear, more pity, more wonder, more reflection at least, than he has deigned to intimate. But a few days passed, and when the people looked again around them, they beheld the reconstruction of their smoking city commencing with extraordinary vigour. The decision with which the plans of the government were taken, must appear to us perfectly amazing. The rebuilding of so large a portion of the largest of ancient cities on a general design, including the construction of a palace, to cover, or at least embrace with all its adjuncts, some hundreds of acres, was carried into execution without a moment's delay, and seems to have been

<sup>1</sup> This remarkable and often cited passage has several difficulties. I understand the "odium generis humani" to mean, not the hatred in which these sectaries were held, but rather their reputed enmity towards all others. It is a question whether the confession mentioned was of the burning or only of the Christian belief: I suppose the latter: "aut flammandi" is obscure in construction, but the sense cannot be doubtful: "sontes" may apply to the specific charge, meaning that the people really believed them guilty of it, or it may relate to the crime of their creed generally. The gardens referred to were on the slope of the Vatican, and embraced, it is supposed, the site of the Place and possibly of the Church of St. Peter's. The obelisk which now fronts that church stood on the spina of Nero's Circus, certainly not far from its present position. Mosheim (*De Reb. Chr. ante Constant.* soc. 1. § 84.) fixes the beginning of this persecution to the middle of the November of this year.



effected in the course of the four years which intervened to the death of Nero.<sup>1</sup> The city of the plebs, a collection of narrow winding lanes which crept along the hollows at the foot of the seven hills, thronged with high unsightly masses of brick or wood-work, among which its shifting crowds could with difficulty wind their way, had long been an eyesore to the denizens of the patrician mansions above, constructed in the graceful style of Greece, their level lines of marble masonry flanked with airy colonnades, and interspersed with broad courts and gardens. This combination, indeed, or contrast of the ancient and the modern, the grotesque and the elegant, this upper growth of aristocratic luxury culminating above the smoky hives of vulgar industry, must have given a character to the whole eminently striking and picturesque. Rome was indeed a double city, half Greek and half Italian. The elements of change long operating in its manners were equally active in its external development. Grecian forms were steadily encroaching on the indigenous features of its architecture. To reform, to improve, had been in fact to copy foreign, and to displace native, models. The marble Rome of Augustus, restorer as he professed himself, was a Grecian mask applied to a Roman countenance. Every new temple or theatre, bath or fountain, added another Hellenic object to the scene, and aided in this gradual disintegration. Nero in all his tastes was Grecian or Oriental; yet when this grand opportunity offered for recasting the lower city on the model he admired, the promptness with which he seized it shows that he followed an instinct of the times, and not a mere caprice of his own. The architects were ready at once with their plans for a total reconstruction after the fashion of Athens or Antioch, a style more familiar to their schools

<sup>1</sup> The conflagration took place in July, 817. Nero's death followed in June, 821; but it would appear that the rebuilding had been completed before that time; certainly the palace had been completed much earlier. It is impossible not to suspect, from this and other circumstances, that the destruction was less extensive than has been represented. The temple of Apollo—apparently that on the Palatine—is mentioned in the year 822 (*Tac. Hist.* iii. 65.).

than the obsolete Italian. After the fire of the Gauls Rome had been rebuilt by the citizens themselves, each man for himself from his own notions and resources; the whole resulting in manifold combinations of a few simple elements, the wooden shed, the broad brick wall, the narrow windows, the projecting eaves, the pointed gable.<sup>1</sup> But after Nero's fire restoration was the work of the government: the citizens, the mass at least of the lower classes who still dwelt in the valleys, were not rich enough to build for themselves, even had they been suffered to do so: the treasury supplied them with money, but at the same time provided them with designs: the time had come when the rulers of the state must execute all great public works for the people, and employ the services of a profession to which architecture of a foreign type was alone familiar. The character indeed of the site, and the necessity of lodging vast numbers upon small areas, must have tended to modify the more lax and spacious features of Hellenic architecture: the crowded dwellings of the Suburra and Velabrum could not have been less than fifty, sixty, or even seventy feet in height: but the substitution, to a great extent, of stone for brick or wood in the basement at least of these edifices, the straightening and widening of the streets, and the erection of open colonnades round every block of houses, was the application of a foreign style, which completely changed the external appearance of Rome. On the whole the system of Nero and his architects was both salubrious and convenient, though many citizens, admirers of all things old, continued to lament the disappearance of their dark and tortuous alleys, and to allege, with some justice perhaps, that the narrowness of the avenues and the height of

<sup>1</sup> The fastigiata and pectinata tecta seem to imply something more than the Greek pediment, and to have been in common use for dwelling-houses, not only for public buildings. There is perhaps no distinct notice of gable ends to the ordinary Roman roofs; but the fact that the earliest temples at Rome were thatched, and therefore of course dwellings also, shows that the roofs must have been high-pitched.

the overhanging edifices had afforded a grateful shade in summer, and protection from the winds in winter.<sup>1</sup>

But Nero, we are told, took advantage of the void which had been created for another and more selfish purpose. He

determined to extend in various directions the limits of his own residence, and to cover a large portion of the area of Rome with the buildings of the Imperial palace. On this point, however, I am constrained to be sceptical. We have already seen that he had before connected the older residence of the Cæsars, enlarged as it had been by successive occupants, on the Palatine, with the villa of Mæcenas on the Esquiline, by a series of galleries which spanned, perhaps, the hollow between those hills on arches, so as to allow of the circulation of the populace in the most crowded parts of the city below it. Such seems to have been the character of the *Domus Transitoria* or House of Passage, which fell, as we have seen, a prey to the flames. I much question, however, whether either of the edifices which it connected had suffered very severely, and the Golden House, as the restored palace was denominated, was still the old mansion of Augustus and the villa of Mæcenas connected a second time by a long series of columns and arches. It is probable, indeed, that the House of Passage was now considerably enlarged, and made to embrace a vast extent of gardens, with their baths, their fishponds, and their storied terraces.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the public must always have had

Extension of  
Nero's palace or  
Golden House.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 48.: "Erant tamen qui crederent veterem illam formam salubritati magis conduxisse." Whatever we may think of the justice of this complaint, it may be worth remarking, as a sign of the difference in our own ideas and the Roman, that there is no expression of regret for the picturesque features of the ancient city so ruthlessly sacrificed to the taste or judgment of the day.

<sup>2</sup> This house, says Tacitus, was not so remarkable for its gold and precious stones, as for the gardens it embraced: "arva et stagna, et in modum solitudinum hinc sylvæ, inde aperta spatia et prospectus," c. 42. The taste of the Romans in gardening required geometrical lines of gravel, pavement, box borders, and shrubberies. See the younger Pliny's description of his Tuscan villa (*Ep.* v. 6.), and some of the frescoes still visible on the walls of houses in

means of communication beneath these galleries, or through them, from the forum to the Cælian hill, and to the Esquiline or Capene gates. We cannot suppose that the emperor's stone walls intercepted the Sacred and the Appian Ways. These colonnades, such as I have imagined them, were three in number; each of them, it is said, a mile in length. They reached, it may be presumed, from the bridge of Caius over the Velabrum, which was perhaps destroyed by the fire, and never, as far as we know, rebuilt, almost to the site of S. Maria Maggiore on the Esquiline, and of S. Gregorio on the Cælian, and these were again connected perhaps by a third.<sup>1</sup> The area now filled with the Colosseum was embraced within their ample circuit, and this spot was occupied by a basin of water.<sup>2</sup> It is a pardonable extravagance in Pliny to declare that the city was *encompassed* by the palace of Nero; but this expression, which he has applied also to the far less extensive encroachments of Caius, seems to show that even within the circuit of its ample arcades many houses, streets,

Pompeii. Matius, the friend of Caesar, invented the art of cutting yews, box, and cypress into figures of men and animals (Plin. *H. N.* xii. 6.), and this grotesque practice survived to the time of Pliny and Martial (Mart. iii. 58., xii. 50.). Nero, I presume, ventured to discard this formality, and his attempt to restore some natural features to a garden landscape offended the admirers of antiquity. This was the "*rure vero barbaroque letari*" of Martial. I refer to Prof. Daubeny's *Lectures on Roman Husbandry*, vii., for these and further details of the subject of Roman gardening.

<sup>1</sup> Martial (*de Spect.* 2.) defines the limits of this palace in two directions by the baths of Titus on the Esquiline, and the portico of Claudius, connected, it may be presumed, with his unfinished temple on the Cælian:

"Claudia diffusas ubi porticus explicat umbras,  
Ultima pars aulæ deficientis erat."

It has been mentioned that Nero is said to have destroyed the works of the Claudian temple: this, if not a misrepresentation, was probably to make room for his own constructions.

<sup>2</sup> Martial, l. c.:

"Hic ubi conspicui venerabiles amphitheatri  
Erigitur specios, stagna Neronis erant."

Comp. Suet. *Ner.* 31.: "*Stagnum maris instar, circumseptum ædificiis ad urbium speciem: rura insuper, arvis atque vinetis, et pascuis silvisque varia.*"

and places were surrendered to the occupation of the citizens. We should still less expect strict accuracy in the statements of a pasquinade, which has been preserved to us by Suetonius. Insinuating a direct comparison between the conflagration of the Gauls and of Nero, *Rome*, it said, *will be reduced to a single house: migrate, O Romans, to Veii, like your ancestors before you; if Veii indeed itself be not embraced also by that single house.*<sup>1</sup> But the epithet of Golden, which this palace obtained, was derived from the splendour of its decorations. Externally it was adorned with all the luxury of art and taste at their highest eminence, with gilded roofs and sculptured friezes, and panels of many-coloured marble. Within, it was a rich museum of painting, precious stones, and statuary: amidst the rubbish of its long-ruined chambers some of the choicest works of ancient art have been discovered, and the modern frescoes which we most admire seem to have been copied by stolen glimpses from walls unveiled for a moment and again shrouded in darkness.<sup>2</sup> The grand entrance from the forum and the Sacred Way was adorned with a marble statue of the emperor 120 feet in height, the colossus which afterwards gave its name to the amphitheatre of Vespasian. When Nero at last took possession of this gorgeous habitation, he remarked complacently that *now he was lodged as a man should be.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 39.:

“Roma domus fiet: Veios migrate Quirites;  
Si non et Veios occupet una domus.”

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 31.: “In cæteris partibus cuncta auro lita, distincta gemmis anionumque conchis erant. Cœnationes laqueatæ tabullis eburneis versatilibus,” &c. The baths of Titus were afterwards erected on a part of this palace on the Esquiline, and stand on its lower chambers, within which the great vase of the Vatican and other monuments of art have been discovered. The Laocoon was found similarly imbedded at no great distance. How such works came to be there left amidst the rubbish seems inexplicable. It is believed that Raphael took the designs of some of his arabesques from paintings revealed in these chambers, which he purposely caused to be filled up again, to conceal the plagiarism.

<sup>3</sup> Martial, l. 2. Suet. l. c.: “Se quasi hominem jam habitare copias.”

These vast constructions were planned and executed by the architects Severus and Celer, both of them, it may be remarked, not of Greek but of Roman origin. These men seem to have been bold designers as well as able builders; their profession combined engineering with architecture. They had great influence with their master, and seem to have inspired him with many grand conceptions, the exact purport of which may have been inadequately represented to us. The navigable canal which they projected, from the lake of Avernus and the Julian haven to Rome, was evidently not a mere freak of power, but a work of utility for the transport of grain to the city.<sup>1</sup> The attempt, made in earnest, was probably abandoned from caprice. The rebuilding of Rome in the course of four years tasked all the energies of the artisans of Italy. But the expense of these extraordinary efforts caused on the whole more dangerous discontent than the worst caprices of tyranny; and unless we suppose Nero devoid of the most ordinary foresight, we must allow that he would hardly have caused a conflagration, which could not fail to entangle him in fatal embarrassments. He was compelled to strain the patience of his subjects by increased exactions. An organized system of plunder was now extended throughout the empire, which ruined the citizens, the allies, and the free communities. Nero began by requiring contributions, under the name of free gifts; and neglect in responding to this invitation was visited by heavier imposts. Treasures, human and divine, were swept into the gulf. The temples of Rome itself were denuded of the offerings of ages, the spoil of con-

Exactions and confiscations required to defray the expense of these constructions.

<sup>1</sup> Nero is said also to have designed extending Rome to Ostia. Suetonius says of his buildings, "Non in alia re damnosior quam in ædificando." The magnificence of his baths continued to be celebrated long after him. Martial says of them, "Quid Neræe pejus? Quid thermis melius Neronianis?" The Church of S. Louis, on the Pincian, is supposed to stand upon them. Ampère, *Hist. Romaine à Rome*, § 3. In the year 817 Nero erected himself also a triumphal arch on the Capitoline, to celebrate his pretended successes against the Parthians. To occupy that sacred site with a monument of personal vanity was an act of unprecedented ostentation. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 18.

quered enemies long hoarded in the shrines of the gods, the trophies of victories and triumphs held sacred through all emergencies, which even Cæsar, who sacked the treasury, had reluctantly respected.<sup>1</sup> From Greece and Asia not the offerings only, but the images of the gods themselves, were carried off by authorized commissioners.<sup>2</sup> Of these Acratus was a freedman of the palace, who retained as a courtier the spirit of a slave;<sup>3</sup> Carrinas Secundus, a freeborn Roman, once a teacher of rhetoric, who had starved at Athens in the practice of his profession, acquired notoriety at Rome, and suffered banishment as a declaimer on tyrannicide, now finished his career as an unscrupulous agent of tyranny.<sup>4</sup> Seneca, as a man of sense and honour, was shocked at these outrages on the national feeling of the Greeks, and distressed lest they should be ascribed to his counsels. Once more he begged leave to retire into privacy. Again disappointed, he affected sickness, and confined himself strictly to his chamber. Some averred that his life was now attempted by poison at Nero's instigation; that he escaped either by the confession of the person employed, or by his own care in abstaining from all suspicious viands, and tasting nothing but plain fruits and vegetables, bread and water. Insults such as these to the faith and feelings of the people were accompanied, no doubt, by cruel extortions and the confiscation of private possessions; and Nero, emboldened by the incredible submission of the world to his feeble sceptre, treated gods and men alike as mere slaves of his will, ordained equally, whether in earth or heaven, for his personal service and gratification. Neverthe-

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, xv. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias refers to the spoliation of the Grecian temples by Nero: v. 25, 26., ix. 27., x. 7. From Delphi he carried off no less than five hundred brazen statues. Caius had robbed the Thespians of a Cupid by Praxiteles, which Claudius restored them. Nero seized it a second time. Comp. Dion Chrysa. *Or. Rhod.* p. 355. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiv. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. l. c.; Dion Chrysa. l. c.: *ὅτε γὰρ Ἀκρατος ἐκείνος τὴν οἰκουμένην σχεδὸν ἀπ᾽ ὅσων περιέβηδεν τούτων χάριν.*

<sup>4</sup> For Carrinas see Dion, lix. 20., and compare Juvenal, vii. 204., alluding, as is generally supposed, to the same person.

less the calamities with which this year closed must have struck him with alarm in the midst of his frantic caprices. An outbreak of gladiators at Præneste was speedily suppressed; but it reminded men of the attempt of Spartacus, and the ancient troubles of the republic, and betrayed the fact that the prospect of revolution was contemplated with hope no less than with apprehension. The loss of some galleys on the Campanian coast, through a thoughtless command of the emperor's which their captains dared not disobey, might impress the singer of the Sack of Ilium with Minerva's vengeance on an older sacrilege; while the occurrence of fearful prodigies, of monstrous births, of storms and meteors, above all, the blazing of a comet, extorted from the soothsayers the prophecy of a new rebellion, though they ventured to promise that it should be instantly quelled.\*

Followed by  
portents and  
disasters.

This apprehension of impending change was, indeed, no groundless presentiment. Nero's crimes and follies had been

\* Virg. *Æn.* xi. 260.:

"Scit triste Minervæ

Sidus, et Euboicæ cautes, ultorque Caphareus."

Tac. *Ann.* xv. 46.: "Clades rei navalis, non bello, quippe haud alias tam im-mota pax." Comp. the fragment of Turnus, Wernsdorf, *Poet. Lat. Min.* iii.: "Et molle imperii senium sub nomine pacis."

\* Tac. *Ann.* xv. 47.: "Sidus cometes, semper illustri sanguine Neroni ex-piatum." Seneca's allusion to this comet is curious, if he was conscious of the conspiracy at that moment in agitation. *Nat. Quæst.* vii. 17.: "Qui sub Nerone apparuit et cometis detraxit infamiam." Virgil speaks generally of the evil influence of comets: "Cometæ Sanguinei lugubre rubent." *Æn.* x. 272. The instinct of a later generation made them always presage evil to tyrants. Lucan, i. 528.: "Terris mutantem regna cometen." Stat. *Theb.* i. fin.: "Mutent quæ sceptrâ cometæ." Sil. i. 460.: "Terret fera regna cometes." And so our republican Milton: "Which with fear of change Perplexes monarchs." To the portent of the comet, Tacitus adds: "Bicipites hominum partus . . . natus vitulus cui caput in crure esset." The double head presaged unnatural rivalry. Comp. Lucan, i. 626:

"Quodque, nefas, nullis impune apparuit extis,  
Ecce! videt capiti fibrarum increscere molem  
Alterius capitis."



long threatened with retribution; and the murmurs of the injured had deepened into a fixed discontent, which official seers might represent as a token of an occult conspiracy.

Among the nobles there were many who complained of personal insults, many whose ambition, whether criminal or honest, had met with unexpected rebuffs, many, no doubt, who had suffered wanton oppression; others who resented the degradation of the republic; lastly, there were some who watched their discontent from a distance, awaiting the moment when they might turn it to their own aggrandisement. It was necessary to fix on some personage around whom the discontented could rally, and whom they could agree to substitute for Nero. There was no idea, in any quarter, of returning to the ancient free state. The pride of independence and mutual equality, once so strong in the Roman aristocracy, had collapsed for ever; to the mass of the people it had never been known. The necessity of monarchy was indeed enforced by practical considerations. No conspiracy could hope for success without the support of the soldiers; the soldiers would not draw their swords for a political abstraction; and any leader to whom they gave their allegiance, must have Rome and the empire at his feet. If, however, they could not escape from subjection to a single ruler, the nobles were anxious to have an easy and quiet man, who would interfere little with them, and even pretend to put himself under their protection. Among the great families already scathed by proscriptions, there was at this time but one peculiarly eminent which was not connected with the hated house of the Claudii and the Julii. The Pisos had long borne themselves as rivals of the emperors: a Cnæus Piso, as we have seen, had fancied himself the equal of Tiberius; and the pride with which another had threatened to withdraw from public life, showed that he could not brook to act as a subordinate. Even after the death of Cnæus, and the disgrace of his house, his sons and grandsons had continued to hold their rank among the Roman nobility. One of the first caprices of Caligula was his

Growing discontent of the nobility.

attempt to degrade the head of the Calpurnii, by taking from him his wife, and afterwards by banishing him.<sup>1</sup> But this man, C. Calpurnius Piso, was restored to favour by Claudius, in compliment to the senate; he was moreover elevated to the consulship. The eloquence of the speech with which he repaid this indulgence has been especially commemorated in the verses of a client or parasite.<sup>2</sup> His abilities, his riches, his liberality are all equally extolled by the same panegyrist; but they are sufficiently confirmed by the sincerer testimony of an historian and a satirist.<sup>3</sup> Piso, however, was not a man of action, and in the absence of higher aims in life he became celebrated for his skill in the mock campaigns of chess or draughts. His mild temper was not agitated, perhaps, by the illusions of political ambition; but he disdained to yield precedence to any other, and held aloof, as far as possible, from public life till tempted in an unwary moment with the offer of pre-eminence.

They form a conspiracy and place Piso at its head.

Around this central figure, itself of no great mark or hopefulness, were soon grouped a number of lesser men, senators, knights, and military officers, intent upon transferring the empire to him from the last descendant of the Julii. Women were also admitted to the conspiracy. Fenius Rufus, the colleague of Tigellinus in command of the prætorians, was impelled to join it by hatred towards the rival who had eclipsed him in his chief's regards. His position, if not his personal qualities, gave him the foremost place in the whole band. Another of the conspirators, a man of more vehemence than

The conspirators, and their plans for the assassination of the emperor.

<sup>1</sup> C. Calpurnius Piso was banished for taking back his wife, after the emperor had dismissed her. Caligula had probably a political motive in this outrageous tyranny. He wanted to bring the rival family to an end.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Carmen ad Pison*. 68. This poem is ascribed by Wernsdorf to Saleius Bassus, the "tenuis Saleius" of Juvenal: it is certainly not Lucan's.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 48. Juvenal, v. 108: "Quæ Piso bonus, quæ Cotta solebat Largiri." The scholiast on this passage confirms, with some additions, the account of Suetonius, *Calig.* 25. He mentions also Piso's fame, "in ludo laticulorum," by which he is identified with the subject of the panegyric.

vigour, was the youthful poet M. Annæus Lucanus, who, in the better years of Nero's career, had been his associate and a rival in versification, and is supposed to have suffered slights from the imperial jealousy.<sup>1</sup> Dion has specified Seneca, Lucan's uncle, as also an accomplice.<sup>2</sup> The tribune of a prætorian cohort, named Subrius Flavius, claimed the honour of assassinating the emperor with his own hand. He proposed to attack him openly while singing on the stage, and again, in the confusion of the conflagration of Rome, to waylay him among the passages of his burning palace.<sup>3</sup> He seems, however, to have been a man of no real determination, and to have shrunk in either case from the personal hazard. It was next proposed to strike the blow when the emperor was at a private villa of Piso's: again Piso refused to violate the laws of hospitality, a piece of sentiment which in such a matter can hardly command our respect. Some indeed surmised that in fact he feared to leave the capital open to a possible rival, or even to the senate and the partisans, if such there were, of a republic.<sup>4</sup> But indecision reigned on all sides among the conspirators. Their behaviour was as frivolous as

<sup>1</sup> The statement in the anonymous life of Lucan (*ex comment. antiquissimo*), that he gained the prize from the emperor at the Quinquennia, is contrary to the text of the genuine biography of Nero. See *Suet. Ner.* 12, 21. The short fragment upon Lucan ascribed to Suetonius affirms, with more probability, that he provoked his patron by some indiscretions, and, having lost his favour, proceeded first to libel and afterwards to conspire against him. But that Nero was jealous of his talent and forbade him to exhibit in public, is distinctly asserted by Tacitus, *Ann.* xv. 49.: "Lucanum propriæ causæ ascendebant quod famam carminum ejus premebat Nero, prohibueratque ostentare vanus assimilatione."

<sup>2</sup> Dion, *lxi.* 24. If not actually engaged in the plot we may infer, I think, from Tacitus that he was aware of it. The sentiment ascribed to him by Dion, that the assassination was necessary to free Rome from Nero and to free Nero from himself, savours of Seneca's rhetoric.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 50. This statement, dropped negligently by the historian, shows, if true, that the conspiracy had been long in agitation.

<sup>4</sup> The apprehended rival was L. Junius Torquatus Silanus, the son of M. Silanus (*pecus aurea*) cons. A. D. 46, poisoned by Agrippina. See above, c. *lii.* Lucius was atnepos, or great-great-grandson, of Augustus.

the motives generally attributed to them were personal and selfish. One indeed among them a freedwoman named Epicharis (but why a woman among them at all? why a Grecian freedwoman?) seems to have acted with more sense and spirit than any of the men. Not only did she embrace their plans with ardour, and nerve their courage to the utmost, but while they were concerting imprudent schemes, and again lightly relinquishing them, she alone undertook to gain the fleet at Misenum, which protected the corn fleets of Alexandria, and held the existence of Rome in its hands. Possibly she, too, was more energetic than discreet. Her secret was betrayed by an officer named Volusius, whom she had engaged in the scheme; but she alone was arrested. The names of her confederates she had concealed from her betrayer, and while she was still retained in custody, and fruitlessly interrogated, the conspirators, trusting to her fortitude and fidelity, continued to meet and deliberate. At last they fixed the nineteenth of April, the day of the Circensian games, for executing their enterprise. A senator named Scævinius demanded the honour of striking the blow, and for this purpose abstracted a votive dagger from a temple of Salus or of Fortune.<sup>1</sup> It was arranged that he should make the attack with the support of a chosen party in the senate, while Plautius Lateranus was prostrating himself before the

<sup>1</sup> I would willingly conjecture that there was some connexion between this Scævinius and the Scæva whom Lucan so delights to honour: *Comp. Phars.* vi. 258.:

“Exornantque Deos ac nudum pectore Martem  
Armis Scæva tuis: felix hoc nomine famæ,” &c.

The last lines the poet penned contain a thrilling reminiscence of this true Roman hero, Cæsarean though he was:

“Scævam perpetuus meritum jam nomina famæ  
Ad campos, Epidamnæ, tuos, ubi solus apertis  
Obsedit muris calcantem moenia Magnum.” x. extr.

We might imagine him only holding his hand, till Scævinius should strike down the last of the Julii, to complete the passage with a sentiment like that of the verse I have before quoted:

“Vivat, et ut Bruti procumbat victima, regnet.”

emperor, and clinging to his limbs or throwing him down. Piso himself was to await the result in the adjacent temple of Ceres, whence Fenius was to fetch him to the camp, and present him, together with Antonia, the daughter of Claudius, to the soldiers. It was still deemed expedient to conciliate the soldiery by the presence of a representative of Germanicus. Such, at least, was the account given by Pliny, though Tacitus hesitates to believe it, from the known attachment of Piso to his wife, and the improbability of Antonia embracing a scheme from which, except by marriage with Piso, she could reap no personal advantage.<sup>1</sup> There seems, however, little force in the objection, while in the abiding sense it implies of military devotion there is something both natural and touching.

And here the historian remarks on the fidelity with which the secret was kept among confederates of different rank, age, and sex. The plot seems to have been in agitation for nearly a year, and even the indiscretion of Epicharis, if we may believe our accounts, seems not to have materially endangered it. But the bold and eager Scævinius at last unwittingly betrayed it. The day before the attempt was to be made, after holding a long conversation with one of the party, he was observed to seal his will, then taking his dagger from its sheath, and trying its edge, he gave it to a freedman, named Milichus, to sharpen. He then lay down to a supper of more than usual profusion, and gave freedom to the most esteemed of his slaves. At the same time his manner was that of a man labouring under anxiety, which he tried in vain to disguise by the assumption of excessive hilarity. Finally he charged Milichus to prepare bandages and fomentations for the cure of wounds. These circumstances awakened suspicion, if indeed Milichus was not actually admitted to the secret. At all events the wretch, *whose servile nature had not been eradicated by freedom*, was tempted to reveal his suspicions by hopes of a splendid re-

Conviction and  
execution of  
the conspira-  
tors.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 53.

ward.<sup>1</sup> The first of the conspirators who were arrested at his indication, and threatened with the question, made ample disclosures. Hopes of pardon induced them to denounce one another, together with some perhaps who were innocent; and Lucan, in particular, is charged with thus revealing the name of his own mother. Such charges, it must be remembered, are commonly made by unscrupulous governments to disgrace a commiserated victim. But the sufferings of a freed-woman would excite little sympathy, and Epi-  
 charis alone, it was admitted, from the weakness Constancy of Epicharis. of whose sex greater infirmity might be expected, refused to betray the men who had trusted her. When, after being lacerated on the rack, she was brought a second time before her judges, bound to the chair, in which she could not sit unsupported, she contrived to strangle herself with the thongs, and died without a confession. Of all the con-  
 spirators, Fenius Rufus was the one whose fate Treachery of Fenius Rufus. deserved the least pity. As prefect of the guards, he contrived adroitly to place himself on the tribunal by the side of Tigellinus, and sought to screen himself from inquiry by the violence with which he judged his own associates. Denounced at last by one of the victims, he turned pale, stammered, and was unable to defend himself.<sup>2</sup> The accused were speedily convicted. Doomed without mercy by this domestic inquisition, they were allowed only to choose their mode of death, an indulgence which spared the government the odium of a public sentence. When escape was impossible, the culprits suffered with the callous fortitude which had become habitual with their class under the terrors of the imperial tyranny. If they deigned to flatter the  
 prince with their last breath, it was for the sake Death of Lucan. of their children. Lucan died with a firmness which, while he still hoped for pardon, is said to have failed him; and, when his veins were opened in the bath, found consolation in reciting some of his own verses, descriptive of a monstrous

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xvi. 56, 57.<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. xvi. 66.

death by bleeding at every pore.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps his conscience would not suffer him to utter at such a moment those denunciations of a tyranny he had so often flattered, or that praise of constancy he had failed to exhibit, with which so much of his poetry glows. *Swords, he had once exclaimed, were given men that they might never be slaves. Again, he is happiest who is content to die, next happiest he who is compelled.* Among the first on whom sentence was pronounced was the unfortunate Seneca, who had in vain withdrawn himself from public affairs, in vain relinquished to the emperor the riches he supposed him to covet. He had long lived in expectation of this catastrophe, and Nero had striven to reassure him by a show of confidence and regard. Nero might indeed be indifferent to his ancient friend; but he had no reason to bear him malice. It was to Poppæa more probably that he owed his doom, for she was not likely to forgive the zeal with which he had dissuaded her lover from repudiating Octavia, and she felt her own influence to depend on removing from Nero's sight even the shadow of honour and virtue. It is some consolation to be assured that his end was composed and dignified.<sup>2</sup> He caused his veins to be opened in the presence of his friends and kindred, and continued calmly to converse with them through the protracted agony of a death, which his age and the sluggishness of his blood rendered peculiarly painful.<sup>3</sup>

Death of Seneca.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 70. The lines were probably those of *Phars.* ix. 811. foll.

"Sanguis erant lachrymæ; quæcunque foramina novit  
Humor, ab his largus manat cruor; ora redundant,  
Et patulæ nares; sudor rubet; omnia plenis  
Membra fluunt venis: totum est pro vulnere corpus."

<sup>2</sup> Comp. iv. 575: "Ignoratque datos ne quisquam serviat enses." x. 211.: "Scire mori sors prima viris, sed proxima cogi."

<sup>3</sup> We may hope that there is no truth in the story introduced by Dion, that Seneca urged his wife Paulina to die with him, to show how successful his lessons had been in teaching her to despise death. She let him open her veins, we are told, but on his dying first, caused them to be bound up again. Dion, *xlii.* 25.: Comp. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 64.

<sup>4</sup> This mode of bleeding to death seems to have been so commonly adopted

The threats of some, and even the calmness of his other victims, redoubled Nero's alarm. They seemed equally to rely on speedy vengeance, to point to unseen avengers. Roused to wild fury by the necessities of self-defence, he extended his blows from the actual conspirators to many more whom he feared and suspected, and his thirst for their blood was stimulated by the glittering prospect of rich estates. The property of men who had been suffered to die by their own hand could not legally be confiscated, and to seize it, sentence of banishment must issue against their heirs, or they must be removed by assassination. Nero invoked the skill of the poisoners. The courage of the miserable nobles quailed completely before the arrow which flies in darkness. For every execution, for every murder, vows and sacrifices were offered in the Capitol. Parents thanked the gods for the loss of their children, sons for the loss of their fathers: the palace doors were hung with garlands by the relations of those over whom the prince was declared to have *justly triumphed*. Nero himself was not unmindful of the informers whose treachery had saved him. Milichus, besides rewards in money, received the title of Preserver. The soldiers were enriched with a donative; the populace were gratified with two thousand sesterces each, and an ample largess of corn. Tigellinus and Nerva, who had conducted the inquiry, were honoured with triumphal statues.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless Nero seems to have faintly excused his severity, and declared in an harangue to the senate, that he was urged by no private feelings, but only by the necessity of his position and the demands of the public safety. This sufficed to open the flood-gates of patrician flattery. The

Further prosecutions, and base adulation of the senate.

from an idea that it was comparatively painless. I have heard that a high medical authority has pronounced it to be much the reverse, at least when the circulation is languid. In such cases the Romans were wont to accelerate the flow of blood with the warm bath: Seneca, in his impatience, allowed himself to be stifled with the steam.

<sup>1</sup> This Nerva is supposed to have been son to the jurist who has been mentioned as intimate with Tiberius. He is not to be confounded with the future emperor of the same name, of whom he may have been the father.



most shameless decrees followed in his honour: thanks and offerings to the gods were, as usual, precipitately voted, and the day of his escape was recommended to perpetual commemoration. The proposal of Anicius Cerialis to erect him a temple forthwith, was only put timidly aside on the pretence that it might seem to anticipate his death; for it was only after death, according to established usage, that the emperor could be pronounced immortal.<sup>1</sup>

But already, not long before the era at which we are now arrived, the living Nero had enjoyed a poetical apotheosis.

Lucan had expressed, in the fervour of his youthful intimacy with the most accomplished of princes, the sentiment common to many dreamers of the day, that the age of conflicts and disasters through which the state had passed was requited by the advent of a Nero to power. This was a compensation for Pharsalia and Munda, for Perusia and Philippi. The ruin of cities, the desolation of fields, the destruction of teeming populations, all were repaid by the prosperity which this child of fortune was to inaugurate. Even the gods of Olympus, it was declared, could not enjoy their ever-blessed sovereignty till they had conquered peace by the overthrow of the giants.<sup>2</sup> There

Lucan's early compliments to Nero.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 74. Modern historians have followed one another in asserting that divine honours were paid by Rome to the living Nero. This passage, to which they alone blindly refer, proves precisely the reverse. "Reperio in commentariis senatus Cerialem Anicium, consulem designatum, pro sententia dixisse, ut templum D. Neroni quam maturtime publica pecunia poneretur. Quod quidem ille *decernebat* (proposed), tanquam mortale fastigium egresso . . ." The remainder of the sentence is corrupt, but the context implies that the proposal was rejected. Setting aside the momentary freaks of Caligula, no Roman emperor, at least for the first two centuries, allowed himself to be worshipped by the citizens; "Jurabit Roma *per umbras*," was the worst in this regard that republican indignation could say of them.

<sup>2</sup> Lucan, *Phars.* i. 87.:

"Jam nihil, O superi, querimur; sociera ipsa nefasque  
Hac mercede placent," &c.

It was not till a later period that Nero affected to close the temple of Janna, "tanquam nullo residuo bello;" the true reading apparently of Suet. *Ner.* 13 :

is more, I believe, in this encomium than merely extravagant flattery. Setting aside the vaunted merits of the prince himself, in which none but juvenile triflers should have seen much to admire, the age seems to have been impressed with signs which to more thoughtful men betokened extraordinary felicity. A blaze of luxury dazzled all eyes. The profusion of the higher classes was taken for a proof of their wealth; but wealthy they undoubtedly were beyond all former experience. The rapidity with which fortunes were made, as it were underground, by the ministers of the imperial government, even by freedmen and slaves, urged men to projects and speculations, to secret investments, and distant enterprises. It would appear that the great and ancient families, which had escaped the proscriptions of recent tyrants, had removed the sources of their abundance from the observation of the central government; and the riches they displayed in the capital might seem to have dropped from the clouds, or sprung from the bosom of the soil. Presently the public was amazed to learn that one half of the province of Africa was held in fee by six noble families of Rome. Such is the statement of a contemporary, and no doubt that statement was believed.<sup>1</sup> The existence of these vast appropriations, indeed, was only made known by their confiscation. But when the emperor's eyes were once directed to that land of fabled riches, the seat of the famous garden of the Hesperides, it was easy to palm fictions upon him, which should exceed the glowing realities of the fortune he enjoyed. A strange story is told of a brainless projector, a man of Punic

Popular anticipation of an age of extraordinary felicity.

Pretended discovery of the treasures of Dido.

but anticipations of a golden age of peace to follow when he should be translated to divine power in the skies were already popular:

"Tum genus humanum positis sibi consulat armis,  
Inque vicem gens omnis amet: pax missa per orbem  
Ferrea belligeri compecsat limina Jani."

<sup>1</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xviii. 7. 3. Speaking of the pernicious extent of private domains in Italy and the provinces: "Sex domini semissem Africa possidebant, quum interfecit eos Nero princeps."

origin, named Cesellius Bassus, who was persuaded, apparently by a dream, that a hoard of gold, in bars and ingots, was to be found in a cave on his own land, which he presumed to be the deposit of Dido, queen of Carthage.<sup>1</sup> He crossed the sea, and hastened to acquaint the prince of the treasure-trove, which by law accrued to the fiscus. Access to Nero, even on such an errand, could only be obtained by money, and Bassus purchased at a handsome price admittance for his glittering tale. For its truth indeed he had no evidence to offer, nor, it seems, was any demanded. The spendthrift's hopes were unclouded by misgivings. He allowed the story to be circulated through Rome, and regaled his ears, while his preparations were in progress, with the flattery of his courtiers, who continued to inflame his expectations. At the same moment the Quinquennial games were in course of celebration, and the circumstance was seized by the poets and declaimers to dilate on the prince's fortune, for whom the soil bore not her accustomed fruits only, nor her precious metals alloyed with dross and earth, but the pure ore itself, already refined for use. Fired with these glowing benedictions, he plunged into deeper prodigality than ever. He became reckless in the profusion of treasures which he believed to be unlimited; the treasury was speedily exhausted in the anticipation of unbounded replenishment. But the officers sent under the guidance of Bassus to recover the hoards he had indicated, spent their time in exploring and digging to no purpose. The people and the soldiers of the province turned out in crowds to witness the search and to protect it. After examining, spade in hand, every corner of the wretched man's estate, with more patience than his crazy tale deserved, they were obliged at last to report the total disappointment of their hopes; and he either put himself to death in despair, or, according to another account, was sent in chains to Rome to answer for his folly or his crime.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 1.: "Lateres (ingots) prægraves jacere, adstantibus parte alia columnis" (bars.)

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 1-3. A. U. 818, A. D. 65. It was even affirmed by some that the culprit was contemptuously released.

What remains of the year 818, the most fertile perhaps in all our annals in marked contrasts of the horrid and ludicrous, of public and private sufferings, of barbarous cruelty and frantic resistance, shall be told nearly in the words of Tacitus himself. *The senate*, the historian says, *on the return of the Neronian (Quinquennial) games, anxious to avert a public scandal, offered the emperor the prize for song and crown of eloquence, without the show of a contest. But Nero, protesting that he required no favour, insisted on being pitted against his rivals, and earning his honours by the sworn award of the judges. First, he simply recites a poem on the stage; then, implored by the populace to exhibit all his accomplishments, he plays and dances before them, observing in every particular the rules prescribed to the performers, who must not sit down to rest themselves, nor wipe their brows with a handkerchief. Finally, bowing the knee, and making a professional salute, he awaited the judges' decision with a show of bashful apprehension.<sup>1</sup> And the populace too, wont to follow every movement of the actor with voice and gesture, cheered throughout in concert. They seemed to be really delighted; and so perhaps they were, so reckless were they of the national dishonour. But the spectators from remoter burghs of Italy, still retaining some antique notions, those too from the prov-*

Nero's performance in the theatre

<sup>1</sup> Nero's vocal and musical powers are thus described in the dialogue which bears his name included in the works of Lucian. "His voice is unnaturally deep and hollow (comp. Lucan's jest, 'Sub terris tonuisse putes'), and seems to buzz in his throat with a disagreeable sound, which, however, he mitigates by modulating it carefully to music. His skill as a singer is not contemptible, except inasmuch as it is contemptible in an emperor to attend to such things at all. But when he enacts the part of the Gods, how ludicrous he is! yawn the hearers must, in spite of a thousand perils. For he nods, drawing a long breath, squares his toes, raises himself to the utmost, and bends back like a man bound to the wheel. Naturally of a sanguine complexion, his visage now glows with a deeper red." Then follows the story of a tragedian, who persisted in contending for the prize against him, with great applause from the audience, but much to Nero's mortification, who set on some of the players to attack him and beat him to death.

*inces who were strangers to the abandoned habits of the city, were ashamed and affronted; and these, when they refused to clap their hands, and even hindered the hired applauders, were beaten by the soldiers posted among the seats. Many knights were trodden down in trying to make their way out: others were seriously injured by keeping their places a day and a night without intermission, fearing to be denounced if they absented themselves for a moment, by spies set to watch every movement even of their countenances. Of the poorer sort, indeed, many were punished on this account on the spot: against the nobler the ill-will of the emperor was treasured for future manifestation.<sup>1</sup>*

*After the conclusion of the games died Poppæa, from the chance violence of her husband, who kicked her when in a state of pregnancy: for I cannot believe in the story of poison, though asserted by some writers, from mere hatred, as I believe, to Nero; for he was anxious for children, and greatly enamoured of his wife. Her body was not consumed by fire, as is the Roman custom; but embalmed after the manner of foreign kings, and thus introduced into the sepulchre of the Julii. The obsequies, however, were publicly solemnized, and Nero himself pronounced her eulogy from the rostrum, praising her beauty, declaring that she was the mother of a divine infant (a daughter she had lately borne him, already dead), and representing her other gifts of fortune in the light of personal merits.<sup>2</sup>*

Death of Poppæa. Divine honours paid to her.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xvi. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. xvi. 6.: Suet. Ner. 85.: Dion, liii. 27. Our author does not mention, though he afterwards alludes to the fact as if mentioned, that the senate decreed divine honours to Poppæa. Embalming, after the fashion of the Egyptians and the Greek sovereigns in the East, from a symbol of immortality easily slid into a symbol of divinity. Pliny has a remarkable statement that the amount of spices consumed at Poppæa's funeral exceeded a whole year's produce of Arabia (xii. 41.). This would naturally be understood to refer to the burning of her body, and the critics are perplexed at the apparent discrepancy between the two authors, nor do I think they are successful in reconciling them. I fear it must be considered one of the blunders which Pliny, in his haste and indiscriminate appetite for miscellaneous information,

*The death of Poppæa, much mourned in public, not less blest in secret from the sense of her shamelessness and cruelty, was the more bitterly considered from Nero's forbidding C. Cassius to appear at her funeral. This was the first sign of the coming evil, which was not long delayed. Silanus was included in the same proscription; with no charge against either, except that Cassius was eminent for ancestral wealth and high consideration, Silanus for illustrious birth and youthful modesty. Such were the crimes for which Nero sent a message to the senate, in which he insisted that they should both be removed from the commonwealth, objecting to Cassius that among the images of his ancestors he venerated the bust of the tyrannicide inscribed the Party-Leader. This, he said, was to sow the seeds of a civil war, to urge a revolt against the family of the Cæsars. Moreover he had attached to himself Silanus, a restless and turbulent stripling, to lure the disaffected to rebellion. Silanus, he declared, had presumed already to promise posts and places: a charge as frivolous as false; for Silanus, thoroughly cowed by the death of his uncle Torquatus, was only anxious to secure his own safety. But further, the prince suborned delators to accuse Lepida, the wife of Cassius and aunt to Silanus, of incestuous intercourse with her nephew, and the practice of magical rites. Certain senators, Vulcatius and Marcellus, and a knight, Calpurnius Fubatus, were arrested as his accomplices; these men, however, got a respite by appealing to the prince, and eventually escaped, from their insignificance, among the greater crimi-*

Proscription of  
C. Cassius and  
L. Silanus.

has too often committed. With this memento before us we may allow some distrust of another statement also, that Poppæa was always followed by a troop of five hundred she-asses to provide her a bath of milk, as a cosmetic, daily. That her mules were shod with gold we may, if we please, admit. It should be observed that Dion's repetition of these stories is no confirmation of them. It is remarkable that Josephus (*Antiq. Jud. xx. 7. 11.*) calls this wretched creature "a devout woman," θεοσεβής γὰρ ἦν. Perhaps she patronized the Jewish freedmen connected with the palace; possibly she discountenanced the Christian converts. Josephus was, however, under some personal obligations to her. See Joseph. *Vit. 3.* On this point more will be said in another place.

nals by whom Nero's attention was engaged. On Cassius and Silanus exile was pronounced by decree of the senate. Lepida was left to the emperor's judgment. Cassius was transported to Sardinia to die there of old age: Silanus was removed to Ostia to be sent to Naxos; but he was presently confined in Barium, a town of Apulia. While enduring there his undeserved misfortune with the fortitude of a philosopher, he was laid hands on by a centurion under orders to kill him. He declared himself well prepared to die, but he would not suffer a cut-throat to claim the honour of slaying him. Such, though unarmed, were his vigour and resolution that the centurion was obliged to call his men to hold him; yet he struggled against him with his bare hands till despatched at last with cut and thrust, as if in regular combat.<sup>1</sup>

Nor less sudden was the destruction of Lucius Vetus, his mother-in-law Sextia, and his daughter Pollutia, objects of hatred to the prince because their mere existence seemed to reproach him with the slaughter of Rubellius Plautus, the son-in-law of Vetus.<sup>2</sup> Nero first discovered his feelings on hearing the delation of Fortunatus, a freedman of Vetus, and of Claudius Demianus, a man whom Vetus, when proconsul of Asia, had cast into prison for his crimes. When the accused was informed of the kind of witnesses who were pitted against him, he quits Rome for his Formian villa. Soldiers are sent to surround and watch him at a distance. His daughter was with him, still brooding over the recollection of her husband's death, of the murder she had herself witnessed, of the severed head she had embraced. She preserved his blood-stained garments as a widow and a mourner, taking only meat and drink sufficient to sustain her alive. At her father's desire she now re-

Death of Lucius  
Vetus, his  
mother and  
daughter.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 7-9. This was the L. Junius Torquatus Silanus referred to in a preceding note.

<sup>2</sup> This L. Vetus is mentioned in *Ann.* xiv. 58 by the name of L. Antistius. He was consul with Nero in the first year of his reign, A. D. 55. He commanded afterwards in the Upper Germany, and proposed to connect the Rhine and Saone with a canal. *Ann.* xiii. 53. See above, ch. II.

pairs to the emperor at Naples, and access being denied her, haunts his door to extort an audience, calling on him to hear the innocent, not to surrender to a freedman his own colleague in the consulship, sometimes with womanish lamentations, and again, casting off her sex, with threats and frantic violence, till the prince's obduracy moved the disgust of all beholders. Then at last she bids her father abandon hope, and bear what is beyond help. The trial, he hears, is impending, and a severe sentence prepared. Friends advised him to make Cæsar heir to the bulk of his property, and secure, perchance, the remainder for his grandchildren. But this counsel he rejected, and lest by a last act of base submission, he should disgrace a life which had bordered on independence, first divided his money and furniture among his slaves—all but three couches retained for a triple bier;—then himself, his daughter, and his mother, together in one chamber, with the same steel sever one another's veins;—wrapped each, for decency, in a single blanket, they are laid hastily in the vapour-bath, each gazing on the others and praying to be the first to die, and leave the others dying yet still alive. And fortune maintained the proper order: the elders died first and last the latest born. They were tried after their burial: it was decreed that they should suffer after the manner of the ancients. Nero pretended to forbid this severity, allowing them forsooth to die in private: such was the mockery super-added after they were dead and gone.

Publius Gallus, a Roman knight, was interdicted fire and water, because he had been intimate with Fenius Rufus, and on no distant terms with Vetus. The freedman and accuser were rewarded for their pains with seats in the theatre among the tribune's attendants. And the month which followed April (called now Neronian) was changed from *Maius* to *Claudius*, while June assumed the name of *Germanicus*, because, as Cornelius Orfitus in proposing the change declared, the name of Junius had been rendered ominous by the deaths of two guilty Torquati.

Name of the month *Maius* changed to *Claudius*, and Junius to *Germanicus*.



*This year, disgraced by so many deeds of horror, was further distinguished by the Gods with storms and sicknesses.*

Campania and the neighbourhood of Rome ravaged by storms and pestilence.

*Campania was devastated by a hurricane which overthrew buildings, trees, and the fruits of the soil in every direction, even to the gates of the city, within which a pestilence thinned all ranks of the population, with no atmospheric disturbance that the eye could trace. The houses were choked with dead, the roads with funerals: neither sex nor age escaped. Slaves and free men perished equally amidst the wailings of their wives and children, who were often hurried to the pyre by which they had sate in tears, and consumed together with them. The deaths of knights and senators, promiscuous as they were, deserved the less to be lamented, inasmuch as falling by the common lot of mortality they seemed to anticipate the prince's cruelty.<sup>1</sup>*

We have seen in these extracts a graphic representation of the mingled farce and tragedy which one man's wantonness, and the supineness of the million, allowed to be inflicted on the great Roman people; and the disaster with which it concludes, the visitation of a superior Providence, though in the actual amount of suffering far more terrible, is felt as a relief because at least it brought with it no stigma upon humanity. The thirty thousand victims who were registered in this single autumn in the temple of Libitina, may be compared with twice that number entered in the bills of mortality in the course of eighteen months in the great plague of London.<sup>2</sup>

Melancholy reflections of Tacitus on his task as an historian.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 10–13. The account of this year concludes with a notice of the prince's liberality to the city of Lugdunum, to which he repaid a large sum it had formerly presented to Rome, on the occasion perhaps of the fire. Read with Ritter *urbis* for *turbidis* (*casibus*), and comp. xv. 45. "*conferendis pecuniis pervastata Italia, provincias eversa,*" &c.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Suet. *Ner.* 39.: "*Pestilentia unius auctumni quo triginta millia ad rationem Libitinæ venerunt.*" It is needless to say that this statement affords no adequate ground for calculating, with Brotier and others, the population of Rome; but it is important as showing the care and method with which the register of deaths was kept.

But Nero, who it seems had fled from the contagion to his Campanian watering-places, still continued to exercise the same cruelty as before, and the year 819 commenced with another iniquitous process, which destroyed two nobles, one of them a son of Ostorius Scapula, himself a soldier of reputation.<sup>1</sup> He was already afraid of his own officers, of the men of action, not of words, the men who swayed the affection of the legions to which his own person was unknown. Here Tacitus pauses for a moment, as if overcome by the horror of his subject, and embodies in despairing language his distress at the prostration of his countrymen's energies, while he justifies the sad interest with which he still lingers over it. *Even, he says, were I relating foreign wars, and deaths endured for the republic, I should both fatigue myself and expect to fatigue my readers with the same unvaried tale of sad though not dishonourable ends. But now the servile patience of the sufferers, and the loss of so much blood at home, oppress the soul and overwhelm it with melancholy. Nor would I ask of those to whom these horrors shall become known any other indulgence for the wretches who perished so pusillanimously, but to refrain from detesting them. It was the wrath of the Gods against the Roman state; not such as, in the case of armies worsted or cities taken, may once be noted, and then passed over in silence. We owe it to the posterity of illustrious nobles to recount all their deaths separately, just as the obsequies of each are distinguished from the common herd of funerals.*<sup>2</sup> And so, with these bitter words, he returns again to his task, and proceeds with dogged endurance to record the names and fortunes of the sufferers of the years which followed. A chance which he did not anticipate, but which he would hardly have regretted, has abridged the story of these gloomy times, and confined the remaining pages of our author's annals to little more than

Tac. Ann. xvi. 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. xvi. 16.: "Detar hoc illustrium virorum posteritati, ut quomodo exsequiis a promiscua sepultura separantur, ita in traditione supremorum accipiant habeantque propriam memoriam."

a single subject, to which we, too, must follow him with respect and sympathy.

Before, however, we proceed to the crowning enormity of the death of Thræsea, another proscription must be noticed, partly as involving one name at least of historical notoriety, partly as illustrating the horrors under which the Roman nobles at this time lived and perished. **Annæus Mela**, **Rufius Crispinus**, **Anicius Cerialis**, and **C. Petronius** were involved in the same fate almost at the same moment. **Crispinus**, it seems, was a public character; he had been præfect of the prætorians and worn the consular ornaments; such being the case he became an object of jealousy to aspiring courtiers, and liable to false accusation. Charged accordingly with participation in some recent conspiracy, probably that of **Piso**, he had been banished to **Sardinia**, where he soon put an end to his own life. But **Mela** had preferred a private station to the perils of a more conspicuous career.<sup>1</sup> This man was the brother of **Gallio** and **Seneca**, and seems to have partaken of the Epicurean indifference of the one, together with the love of money which casts a stigma on the other. Not seeking to rise above the rank of knight-hood, he had amassed wealth for himself while replenishing the imperial fiscus in the provinces. He was father, how-

<sup>1</sup> I have mentioned the three sons of **M. Annæus Seneca** the rhetorician in chapter xli.: "*docti Senecæ ter numeranda domus.*"—*Mart.* iv. 40. Of these **Novatus** took the name of **Gallio** after adoption by **M. Junius Gallio**. He is generally supposed to be the **Gallio** mentioned in *Acts* xviii. 12. as proconsul of **Achaia** under **Claudius**. His mildness of character ("caring for none of these things") is referred to by **Statius** (*Sylv.* ii. 7. 32.): "*dulcem generasse Gallionem;*" and by **Seneca** (*Nat. Qu. præf.* iv.): "*quem nemo non parum amat, etiam qui amare plus non potest;*" the false brilliancy of his style by **Tacitus** (*de Orat.* 26.): "*tinnitus Gallionis.*" The brothers seem to have been all addicted to letters. I know not why **M. Nisard**, in his *Études sur les Poètes latins* (i. 89.), in advancing his theory that the Tragedies which go under the name of **Seneca** were written by different members of the family (*Senecanum opus*, he calls them), excludes **Gallio** from the partnership. **M. Nisard** cannot inform us how the authorship of the several plays is to be distributed, except that he gives the *Octavia*, as the worst, decidedly to **Lucan**. I think myself that there is strong evidence of **L. Seneca** being author of some at least of them.

ever, to Lucan, a relation which, however honourable, exposed him to danger and led ultimately to his ruin. After his son's death, he had shown, it is said, peculiar keenness in collecting the debts due to him, and in so doing had offended a certain Fabius Rusticus, who charged him in revenge with complicity in the crime. His wealth insured his condemnation. Forged letters were produced, a case of *Majestas* was vamped up, and Mela, after bequeathing a large part of his estates to Tigellinus, in hope of preserving the remnant for his heirs, shrank from the anxiety of a trial by opening his own veins. But to his last will he had appended a word of complaint at being thus compelled to die in his innocence, while Crispinus and Cerialis, the prince's real enemies, were allowed to survive him. The first indeed, as we have seen, had already destroyed himself: the other, on finding his own life menaced, speedily took the same course. Petronius, who was sacrificed to the jealousy of Tigellinus, seems to have been a man of more remarkable character than any of these. His sentiments and habits were those of Character and death of Petronius. a *Mæcenas*, transferred to a corrupter age, and confined to a lower sphere. He had governed Bithynia; and become subsequently consul; and in these high offices he had shown, like his trusty prototype, activity and vigilance. But when released from public trammels, choice and policy combined to dispose him to the enjoyment of ease and luxury in a private station: his days were passed in slumber, his nights devoted to genial dissipation. If he still occupied a large space in the eyes of the citizens, it was owing to his refined taste, to the exquisiteness of his luxury, and the elegance of his debauches; and all he said and did was repeated with admiration of his studied ease, or, to borrow a phrase of his own, its *curious felicity*. Petronius was admitted, with the choicest profligates of the day, to the prince's intimacy, and stood so high in his confidence as to be entitled the Arbiter of the Imperial Pleasures. Nothing was grateful, nothing was admired in luxury, but what had the stamp of his approbation. But here he invaded the

province coveted by Tigellinus. Two favourites could not sit so near the throne together. Tigellinus proved the craftier: he accused his rival of a guilty intimacy with the traitor Scævinius, and having suborned a slave to depose against him, deprived him by an adroit manœuvre of the means of defence. Nero was at the time in Campania, and Petronius was seized on his way to visit him, and detained far from all assistance at Cumæ. We hear no more in this age of the judicial contests of the delators under Tiberius. Accusers had not now the opportunity of making themselves famous for their oratory. Their hateful trade was no longer gilded even by the false glory of eloquence. Petronius, like so many others, resolved at once to anticipate trial and sentence by suicide. The manner indeed in which he proceeded to yield his life was singular. Summoning his friends to his presence, he opened his veins in the course of their conversation, bound them, and opened them again, as its interest warmed or languished. But their talk was not of matters of philosophy or the question of the soul's immortality: they only recited trifling compositions, and improvised verses. To some of his slaves he made presents, others he caused to be punished. He lay down to supper, composed himself to sleep, and sought to give his death the appearance, and if possible the sensations, of a natural end. In his will he refused to follow the mode of flattering the emperor or his creatures, and filled a codicil with the indignant recital of their enormities. He signed and sealed, and transmitted this document to the tyrant. Finally, he broke his signet, that it might never again be used to bring the guiltless into peril; and dashed in pieces a costly murrhine vase, to deprive Nero of the relic which he knew him most ardently to covet.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxvii. 7. As regards the authorship of the *Satyricon*, which goes under the name of Petronius Arbiter, the reader may refer to the elaborate arguments of Studer in the *Rheinisches Museum*, 1843. This writer maintains the old view. He collects allusions to the age of Nero and the early emperors: as 1. in the reflections on the decline of eloquence, c. 1. (comp. the *Dial. de Orat.* c. 35.); 2. on the wealth and manners of freedmen (comp. Plin.

Our sole relief in tracing the bloody records of the Neroian tyranny is the reflection that its victims, ill-used as they were, were seldom worthy of a happier fate: in most at least of the cases we have noticed, they were among the basest, the most abandoned, and, when occasion offered, the most barbarous of their countrymen. We may presume that the indifference with which citizens, provincials, and slaves witnessed the massacre of their chiefs, their patrons, their masters, was derived from a strong sense of the iniquity of their career, their crimes and vices. We pay the tribute of a sigh to the fate of Britannicus and Octavia, innocent as they yet were in the first bloom of youth; but we confess that they too, had they been suffered to live a few years longer, would probably have lived to deserve all their sorrows. But the crowning crime of Nero was of a different stamp; for its victims were men of acknowledged honour and probity. *Nero at last, says Tacitus, yearned to destroy Virtue itself, in the persons of Pætus Thrasea and Barea Soranus.*

These two illustrious names have been thus joined together by Tacitus, and the connexion shall not be severed, though it does not appear that there was any alliance in blood or friendship between them, nor were they in fact involved in a common proscription. They were united in the protest of their noble lives against the iniquity of the times. Soranus had been pro-

Pætus Thrasea  
and Barea So-  
ranus.

*Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 11., Senec. *Epist.* 27.); 3. on Orbitas (comp. Senec. *ad Marc.* 19. and alib. Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 52.); 4. in the names Mæcenatianus, Apelles, Menecrates (comp. Suet. *Calig.* 32, *Ner.* 30.); 5. in the estimate of Lucan as a poet; 6. in the verses on the civil wars; 7. in the reference to an invention for working glass with the hammer (comp. Plin. xxxvi. 26., Dion. lvii. 21.); 8. in the mention of the Vinum Opimianum and the Horti Pompeiani; 9. in the reference to the substitution of mosaic work for painting, c. 83. (comp. Plin. xxxi. 1.); 10. to the new fashion of anointing the feet, c. 70. introduced, according to Pliny, xiii. 3., under Nero. He further shows that the arguments of Niebuhr and others for placing the work later, i. e. in the time of the Antonines, the Severi, or even Constantine, are of no value, and, on the whole, leaves me tolerably confident that it belongs to the age of Nero, and was composed by Petronius, the "Arbiter elegantiarum" of that emperor.

consul in Asia, and had shown unusual consideration for the claims of the subject provincials. But besides being rebuked by his superior goodness, Nero had special grounds of mortification against him. He had refused to punish a city which had defended the statues of its gods against the commissioner sent by Nero to plunder it. He was marked for accusation by a needy delator. He was charged with intimacy with the culprit Rubellius Plautus, and with treasonable intrigues in his province. Against Thrasea the charges were still more vague than these. This man was eminent among the Stoics, the sect then most in vogue among the Roman nobility; and even the stern thoughtful air and sober garb which became his profession, were felt as a reproach to the frivolous dissipation of the prince and his flatterers.<sup>1</sup> His household was regulated with antique simplicity: his wife, the child of the heroic Arria, was wise and patient; his son-in-law, Helvidius Priscus, was brave and generous; he was admired by the gentle Persius, a philosopher without conceit, and a satirist without gall.<sup>2</sup> All his public acts, for he was a senator and had held high office, were remarked by the bad with mortification, by the good with undisguised triumph. When the cruel motion was made in the senate against the memory of Agrippina, Thrasea had retired without giving his vote: in the Neronian games, when so many nobles had disgraced themselves by unworthy compliances, Thrasea had stiffly declined; an offence the more pointed because in the Antenorian games at his own city Patavium, he had relaxed, as a Greek among Greeks, and taken part in the acting and singing.<sup>3</sup> He had interfered to moderate the fierce flattery of the senate, when it would have put Antistius to death for raillery against

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 37.: "Thrasæ objectum est tristior et pædagogi vultus."

<sup>2</sup> The scholiast on Persius informs us that the poet was kinsman to Arria. Rupert. in Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 34. It is conjectured that Thrasea belonged to the Gens Fannia.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 21.: "Parum expectabilem operam præbuerat." "he had not done what was required of him." It has been explained elsewhere how the proud Roman of the city deigned to make himself a mere Greek in the holidays in the country.

the emperor. Again, when divine honours were decreed to Poppæa, he had abstained from attending her obsequies.<sup>1</sup> Capito Cossutianus, the son-in-law of Tigellinus, kept a note of all these delinquences, *partly from his own vicious hatred of virtus*, but still more, perhaps, for the effectual aid Thræsea had lent to certain envoys from Cilicia, who had been sent to Rome to charge him with oppression in their province.

Nor was this all: the conduct of the stern republican had been marked by still increasing symptoms of political disgust, which could not fail to be noticed. His admirers

in the next generation related with a glow of satisfaction how Thræsea and Helvidius were

*Frivolous  
charges against  
Thræsea.*

went to pledge each other, crowned with festal chaplets, on the birthdays of Brutus and Cassius;<sup>2</sup> but whether this were so or not, the detractors of his own day remarked, with a shrug, that he had shunned making oath to the emperor at the commencement of the year; that though a quindecimvir, he had failed to offer vows for his safety; that he had never sacrificed for his health, or for the preservation of *his heavenly voice*: once a constant attendant in the senate-house, he had for three years refrained from entering it: lately when the fathers had rushed to condemn Vetus and Silanus, he had pleaded clients' business to keep away. This, it was said, was secession from public life; this was faction: if many chose to do the same, it would be dissension, it would be civil war. In their proneness to party contentions, people, it was muttered, were beginning to talk forsooth of *Nero* and *Thræsea*, as formerly of *Cæsar* and *Catō*. *Followers he has,*

<sup>1</sup> That divine honours were decreed to Poppæa, though not before stated by Tacitus, appears also from Dion, lxxiii. 26. Her temple was dedicated by Nero, inscribed with the epigraph, "*Sabinæ Deæ Veneri matronæ fecerunt.*" Eckhel, *Doctr. Numm.* vi. 287., gives two coins inscribed on one side to "*Diva Claudia*," the infant daughter, on the other to "*Diva Poppæa Augusta.*"

<sup>2</sup> Juvenal, v. 36.:—

"Quale coronati Thræsea Helvidiusque bibebant  
Brutorum et Cæsar natalibus."

The respect in which Thræsea was held by later generations is strongly marked in the epistles of the younger Pliny. See vii. 19., viii. 22.



it was added, *who affect his dress and manners, if not yet the perverseness of his opinions ; and reflect on the genial laxity of the prince by their sourness and solemnity. By him alone the life of Cæsar, his accomplishment, his genius, are held in no honour. To believe Poppæa no goddess, evinced the same evil spirit as to withhold approval from the acts of the divine Julius and the divine Augustus. The journals of the Senate were read in the provinces and the camps, only to discover the motions which Thræsea refused to sanction. The sect to which he belonged had been ever the patron of a faction ; it had numbered a Tubero and a Flavonius, names distasteful even to the republic. Such are the men who now set up the name of Liberty as a plea for overthrowing the empire : should they succeed in overthrowing it, they will soon attack liberty itself. . . .* These insinuations easily inflamed the fury of Nero, and he encouraged Capito to proceed with his impeachment with the aid of another vehement delator, Eprius Marcellus.<sup>1</sup>

The reader will have remarked that hitherto the victims of Nero had almost all perished in private. Either he had made use of secret assassination, or threats alone had sufficed to drive his enemies to suicide in the recesses of their own houses. Slowly, and from confused and doubtful whisperings, had the people learnt for the most part the fate of Agrippina and Britannicus, of Octavia, Cassius, and Silanus. Such deeds were not exhibited in public, such records were not written in contemporary history. The sensibility of that excitable populace was little affected by mutterings of horrors removed actually from their sight, or softened to their imaginations by the lapse of time. This was no doubt the secret of Nero's policy, which enabled him to break all his pledges to justice and humanity, and gave impunity to crimes which posterity has so deservedly execrated. But in the cases now before us, the threats of the accusers seemed to be of no avail, and the emperor was prevailed on to consent, not

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xvi. 22.

without apprehension, to the course of a public prosecution. A moment was adroitly seized to carry through the process when attention was absorbed in a matter of casual interest. Tiridates, a claimant to the throne of Armenia, came to Rome to receive the diadem from the hand of the emperor. To dispose of foreign crowns was the pride of the senate and its chiefs, and here a rival potentate was stooping to receive the gift. Nero, with no conquests of his own to boast of, was eager to make a grand display of his dignity and power.<sup>1</sup> The citizens, with their increasing frivolity and love for shows and ceremonies, were gloating over the meeting of the prince and the king, when Thræsea and Soranus were both suddenly denounced. Thræsea desired an interview with the emperor: this being refused, he addressed him by letter, pledging himself to refute every accusation, and requiring only to be confronted with his accuser. Nero had eagerly seized the paper in which he hoped to read an avowal of guilt, accompanied with an abject submission. Disappointed in this anticipation, he resolved with mortified vanity to let the impeachment proceed, and summoned the senate to hear and pronounce upon it.

On the circumstances of this illustrious sacrifice Tacitus dwells with peculiar solemnity. He sets before us, as in a discussion of the friends of Thræsea, the arguments which were doubtless often in the mouths of the sufferers of those days and their anxious associates, for defying the delator with a bold though hopeless defence, or for submitting in silence to the inevitable sentence. On the one hand, those who urged the

Thræsea discusses with his friends the course he should adopt.

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, *Ner.* 13., describes the ceremony. Nero wore triumphal robes, surrounded by troops, and the whole solemnity bore a military character. At the close the soldiers saluted him with the title of Imperator, and his laurels were offered to Jupiter in the Capitol. This presumed victory was followed by the closing of the temple of Janus. Comp. the medals on which the closing of Janus is recorded, as given by Eckhel, vi. 273., which must overrule the conflicting statement of Orosius, though professing to be taken from Tacitus, that Janus was never closed between Augustus and Vespasian.—Oros. vii. 8.

accused to present himself in the senate-house declared their conviction that his constancy would not fail him; he would say nothing but what would enhance his reputation. . . . *Let the citizens behold him confronting the terrors of death: let the fathers hear his words, the words of a god rather than of a man: possibly even Nero himself might be moved by the eloquence of inspiration: at least, should he persist in his cruelty, posterity would distinguish this example of a worthy death from the cowardice of those who let themselves perish in silence.* . . . . On the other hand, some advised him to await the event in his own chamber. To his virtue and constancy they paid the same tribute as the first speakers; but they warned him of the insults he might have to undergo; the railing of his accusers might be followed by the revilings, and even the blows, of the servile crowd around them. . . . *Let him relieve the senate from the infamy of such a crime; let him leave it undetermined what the fathers would venture to decree against Thræsea at their bar. That Nero would be made to blush there was no hope whatever; but defiance might goad him to further cruelties against his victim's children.* But the counsels of the anxious band were not solely confined to considerations of dignity or expediency. One at least among them, the young Arulenus Rusticus, offered at all risks to intercede, as tribune of the people, and exercise the ancient right of his office to quash the decree of the senate. He was only restrained by the mild prudence of Thræsea himself, who pronounced that now, on the threshold of a public career, it was his duty not to throw away his life to no purpose, but reserve it for the chance of future usefulness.<sup>1</sup>

Every suggestion invited and affably considered, the sage withdrew to make his final determination in private. Meanwhile, the proceedings of his enemies were carried on impetuously. The next morning two prætorian cohorts occupied the temple of Venus Genitrix, whither the senate was summoned. The ap-

Proceedings  
against him in  
the senate.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. Ann. xvi. 25, 26.

proaches were thronged by bands of gowned citizens, sword in hand, while soldiers were posted in the forums and halls around; it was amidst the scowls and threats of these terrible bystanders that the fathers entered the Curia. A message from the emperor was delivered. It contained a general complaint against the senators for deserting their posts, and preferring the ease of their suburban pleasantries to the fatigues of public duty. This was the theme on which the accusers spoke. Thrasea and Helvidius in the first instance, next to them Paconius Agrippinus and Curtius Montanus, as known objects of the prince's jealousy, were charged with this dereliction of their senatorial duties, ascribed to a contumacious and treasonable disgust towards the government. To Thrasea, it was asserted, the peace of the world, and the victories of the empire, were equally distasteful. The forums, the temples, the theatres, wherever, in short, the Roman people congregated most for duties or amusements, he shunned alike, as though they were solitudes uninhabitable to man. He had snapped the social bonds of rank and profession; he had abandoned the Roman commonwealth; let him die the death, and make the unholy divorce final and complete.

The declamation of Marcellus was loud and passionate; and the senate, terrified beyond its wont by the threatening sights around it, succumbed impotently to its fury. Nevertheless, so deep was the compassion Charges against Soranus. for the blameless virtue of Thrasea, the gallant bravery of Helvidius, the guileless innocence of Agrippinus and Montanus, that when the harangue of the accuser ended, it still sate motionless and silent. Then uprose Sabinus to advance his charges against Soranus, and with the treasons he imputed to the father he combined a charge of unholy divination against his young and widowed daughter. Servilia, such was the matron's name, admitted that she had consulted the sorcerers as to the fate impending on her sire; but she had conceived no imprecations on the prince; for his safety she had always prayed; in the ardour of her feminine devotion she had ever mentioned his name among the gods whom she in-

voked. Soranus avouched her innocence with passionate exclamations: with his acts, whatever their colour might be, he showed that she was in no way connected. But the charges against both were pressed with redoubled vehemence. Among the most conspicuous of the witnesses against Soranus was Egnatius, his client and the professed imitator of his conduct and opinions. The senate was moved with more than common disgust at the sight of a man who professed himself among the straitest of the Stoics, denouncing the noblest model of his own sect.<sup>1</sup>

The accusers, however, were completely successful. After a short pause, which gave room for one example of generous devotion in the person of Cassius Asclepiodotus, a foreigner, once the client and now the defender of Soranus, the senate decreed death, allowing only the choice of death to themselves, against Thræsea, Soranus, and Servilia. Helvidius and Paconius were to be banished from Italy. Montanus was only declared incapable of all public functions as a citizen. Marcellus and Cossutianus, on the other hand, were rewarded with largesses and honours. The whole day had been consumed in this double process. It was already evening when the quæstor of the consul arrived with the fatal intelligence before the door of Thræsea, who, it seems, had remained quietly at home, and was entertaining a number of distinguished friends, both male and female. He was engaged more particularly in a discourse with the Cynic Demetrius, and from the solemnity of his gestures as well as from words which were overheard from him, it was supposed that the topic of their discussion was the nature of the soul, and the independence of mind and body. Amidst the tears and groans of the company, to whom the message was quickly communicated, Thræsea contented himself with urging them not to incur danger on his behalf, and forbade his wife to follow the example of the elder Arria, bidding her live for the

<sup>1</sup> The crime of Egnatius furnished a standing example of unnatural perfidy to the satirists. "Stolcus occidit Baream, delator amicum." Juv. *Sat.* lii. 116.

last solace and protection of their only daughter. Then going forth, he met the messenger of death, and received from his hands the decree of the senate. He rejoiced to find that Helvidius was spared. Taking the young man, together with Demetrius, into his chamber, he held out his arms to the operator, and dashing on the ground the first blood that started, *A libation*, he exclaimed, *to Jove the Deliverer! Look, young man*, he added, *and heaven avert the omen! but in the age to which you are born, it behoves men to confirm their own courage by beholding fortitude in others.*<sup>1</sup> And here,—with only the addition that his pains were long, and that he turned towards Demetrius,—the last sentence of the historian is suddenly interrupted: our manuscripts of this part of Tacitus have come to us from a single copy, and the chance which has torn off some few leaves, perhaps, from the end of a volume, has broken the thread of a narrative, so painfully interesting, so solemnly instructive. The interest is common to all mankind who can sympathize in the sorrows and virtues of the noblest of their species: the instruction is for those who can gather from these agonizing details the warnings or consolations they are fitted to impart. In the following chapter we shall enter upon an examination of the state of thought and sentiment at Rome at this period, which may help us, perhaps, to unriddle some of the perplexing questions which have been opened but not solved for us in the narrative of the historians.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xvi. ult.

## CHAPTER LIV.

CONSIDERATION OF THE CAUSES WHICH INDUCED THE ROMANS TO ENDURE THE TYRANNY OF THE EMPERORS.—FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EDUCATION ALLOWED BY IT ACCEPTED AS A COMPENSATION FOR RESTRAINTS ON POLITICAL ACTION.—TOLERATION OF PHILOSOPHY.—OPPOSITION OF THE STOICS TO THE GOVERNMENT: THEIR CHARACTER AND POSITION IN THE COMMONWEALTH.—STATE OF RELIGION AT ROME: SUPPRESSION OF THE GAULISH SUPERSTITIONS: ENCROACHMENT OF ORIENTAL CULTS.—PROSCRIPTION OF THE SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN PRIESTHOODS.—JUDAISM BECOMES FASHIONABLE AT ROME: INTRODUCED AMONG THE FREEDMEN OF THE PALACE.—TURBULENCE AND PROSCRIPTION OF THE JEWS AT ROME.—FIRST RECEPTION OF CHRISTIAN IDEAS AMONG THEM.—ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.—HIS ARRIVAL AND PREACHING AT ROME.—PERSECUTION OF THE "CHRISTIANS."—QUESTION OF THE APPLICATION OF THIS NAME BY TACITUS.—THE TYRANNY OF THE EMPERORS SUPPORTED BY THE CORRUPTION OF THE AGE.—REFLECTIONS ON ROMAN VICE.—COUNTERACTING PRINCIPLES OF VIRTUE.—CHRISTIANITY ACCORDS WITH THE MORAL TENDENCIES OF THE AGE.—SENECA AND SAINT PAUL.—THE TEACHING OF SENECA MORAL, NOT POLITICAL.—PERSIUS AND LUCAN.

THE tyranny of Nero, and with it the tyranny of the Roman emperors,—that tyranny which has been held up as a warning beacon to freemen for so many hundred years,—has now reached its climax: with Thræsea not a virtuous man, but Virtue itself, in the affected phrase of Tacitus, may seem to have been proscribed. Surveyed from a great distance in time and place, and from our point of view, unfamiliar as we happily are with the circumstances attending them, such atrocities as those recorded in our latter chapters seem to border on the incredible. It is not so much the barbarity of the despot,—released from all fear of God and overwhelmed at the same time with the fear of man,—as the patience of the subjects, that moves our wonder, and appears at first sight among the

Characteristics  
of the Imperial  
tyranny.

most inscrutable problems of history. Every Roman was armed, and the military force at the prince's hand was of the most trifling description; every Roman vaunted himself of the same ruling race as the prince; his equal in intelligence, in theory at least his equal before the law. The emperor of the Romans stood absolutely alone at the head of his people. He had no society of tyrants of his own class, like the slave-owner, to support him: he had no foreign allies, like an autocrat in modern Europe, to maintain his authority as a bulwark to their own. Yet the attempts against the life or power of the Cæsars have been, as far as we have seen, comparatively few. They have generally been the work of private enemies or domestic traitors: those which have been contrived by public men, and for public ends, whether successful or not, have conciliated no sympathy from the multitude. To throw any light on this phenomenon, for such it may deserve to be called, we must look more deeply into the circumstances of the times, and the moral condition of the Roman world.

Of the enormities of Nero more particularly it has been already observed, but it may be well to repeat and enforce the observation, that they were comparatively unknown to the mass of the citizens. Some years of sincere benevolence and virtue, some more of discreet and thoughtful vigilance, had disposed the subjects of Nero to cherish a kindly feeling towards their ruler, and to reject as querulous declamation the vague and unproved charges of tyranny which they might sometimes hear made against him. To some crimes, real and manifest, they suffered themselves to be blinded. The Quinquennium of Nero could not be effaced at once from their memories. The remembrance of it has been among the most lasting monuments of the proneness of the Romans,—shall we not say of mankind in general?—to canonize the virtues of the great rather than to execrate their vices. We have seen, moreover, that the victims of Nero, unlike those of Caius or Tiberius, perished generally with closed doors. Though their crimes,

*Its acts were generally shrouded in comparative privacy.*



their sentences, and the manner of their deaths were discussed in the senate and recorded in the public archives, they were withdrawn at least from the public eye, and the story of their sufferings, when it reached at last the ears of the citizens, was less moving than if they had been witnessed in the open day. We must not judge too harshly of the shrinking from public exposure, or the hope of securing indulgence for a surviving family, which induced so many of the accused to anticipate the centurion's sword by suicide: yet the practice was not less really a crime against society; it riveted more strongly the tyranny of the despot, who might smile at being thus relieved from a portion of the odium due to him. Both Thræsea and Cato fell short of the dignity of suffering, the last and noblest lesson it was given them to teach. We must not wonder that the people showed little sympathy with the men who waived a dying appeal to their feelings, to their self-respect, to their love. They chose to die the death of slaves, when they might have approved themselves as martyrs, and it was as slaves rather than martyrs that they came to be regarded.<sup>1</sup>

But the Romans, it may be added, had they been more conscious of the cruelties thus perpetrated in the midst of them,—had they felt more keenly the pain and shame of the victims of the tyranny which overshadowed them,—would still have borne it with an apathy which it requires some effort to understand. For they were hardened against the sense of wrong and suffering by the viciousness of their own institutions, by their own personal habits and usages, by the daily practice of every house-

The idea of  
tyranny familiar  
to the Ro-  
mans.

<sup>1</sup> Several passages of contemporary writers express some bitterness at the desperation with which the best men threw away their lives. Thus Tacitus praises Agricola (*Agric.* c. 42.): "Quia non contumacia neque inani jactatione libertatis famam fatumque provocabat . . . sciant obsequium ac modestiam, si industria ac vigor adsint, eo laudis excedere quod plerique per abrupta, sed in nullum reipublice usum, ambitiosa morte inolaruerant." *Comp. Ann.* iv. 20.; and *Martial*, i. 9.:

"Nolo virum facili redimit qui sanguine famam;  
Hunc volo laudari qui sine morte potest."

hold among them. Whenever the Roman entered his own dwelling, the slave chained in the doorway, the thongs hanging from the stairs, the marks of the iron and the cord on the faces of his domestics, all impressed him with the feeling that he was a despot himself; for despot and master were only other words for the same fearful thing, the irresponsible owner of a horde of human chattels.<sup>1</sup> When he seated himself in the circus, and beheld the combats of men with beasts, or of men with their fellow-men,—when he smelt the reeking fumes of blood which saffron odours could not allay, heard the groans of the wounded, and, appealed to with the last look of despair, gave ruthlessly the sign for slaughter,—he could not but be conscious of the same glow of pleasurable excitement at the sight of death and torture which is ascribed to the most ferocious of tyrants. Again, when he invaded a province as quæstor or proconsul, and set himself to amass a fortune without regard to duty or humanity, he felt, not without pride, that if among citizens he was a citizen, he was himself a king or an emperor among the subjects of the state. His own conscience would not suffer him to be indignant at any tyranny he witnessed. He had done as much or more himself. Tyranny was his own birthright: how could he resent its exercise in another? unless it immediately touched himself, what interest had he in resenting it? And for all the iniquities he himself practised, he had no doubt a salvo in his own breast. Slavery he firmly believed to be an eternal law of Nature. The free races were, he was assured, as gods to the servile races. He confessed the more readily, perhaps, that Cæsar was in some sense divine, inasmuch as he claimed to be himself of superior nature to the prostrate herds at his feet. But if Cæsar was divine, must he not acquiesce in Cæsar's sovereign authority?<sup>2</sup> An old state tra-

<sup>1</sup> The frightful stories of Vedius Pollio (Dion, liv. 23.), and Pedanius (Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 42.),—with which compare that of Largius Macedo (Plin. *Epist.* iii. 14.),—may suffice to show that the Roman masters were supported by the law in greater cruelties than any the Emperors practiced in defiance of it.

<sup>2</sup> If some were still inconsistent enough to complain of the loss of liberty,

dition pronounced that the massacres of the circus were politically expedient. That men should be hardened against fear by the frequent spectacle of death was a fixed principle in the moral creed of the Roman. Lastly, that Rome should rule the world seemed to him the final cause of creation.<sup>1</sup> He was not generally troubled by any slur thus cast upon Providence, as harsh and partial. He never thought of the moral government of the world as a system of mysterious wisdom and mercy, and it was no part of his philosophy to reconcile the jarring facts around him with the disposition of the Almighty Power to whom he gave the name of Best as well as of Greatest.

The ordinary notion of absolute government, derived from the form it assumes in Europe at the present day, is that of a strict system of prevention, which, by means of a powerful army, an ubiquitous police, and a censorship of letters, anticipates every manifestation of freedom in thought or action, from whence inconvenience may arise to it. But this was not the system of the Cæsarean Empire. Faithful to the traditions of the Free State, Augustus had quartered all his armies on the frontiers, and his successors were content with concentrating, cohort by cohort, a small though trusty force for their own protection in the capital. The legions were useful to the emperor, not as instruments for the repression of discontent at home, but as faithful auxiliaries among whom the most dangerous of his nobles might be relegated, in posts which

The Roman police repressive, not preventive.

Seneca could thus justly rebuke them: "Respondisse tibi servum indignaris, libertumque et uxorem et clientem; deinde de republica libertatem sublatam quereris, quam domi sustulisti."—Senec. *De Ira*, iii. 35.

<sup>1</sup> In such a case the evidence of a popular poet is worth more than that of a philosopher. Statius expounds the universal law of tyranny boldly and plainly, *Sylv.* iii. 3. 49.:

"Vice eunota reguntur

Alternisq; regunt: propriis sub regibus omnis

Terra; premit felix regum diademata Roma.

Hanc ducibus frænare datum; mox crescit in illos

Imperium Superis; sed habent et Numina legem."

were really no more than honourable exiles. Nor was the regular police of the city an engine of tyranny. Volunteers might be found in every rank to perform the duty of spies; but it was apparently no part of the functions of the guardians of the streets to watch the countenances of the citizens, or beset their privacy. We hear of no intrusion into private assemblies, no dispersion of crowds in the streets. It was generally deemed sufficient to divert the interest of the people from public affairs by supplying them with a constant variety of employment or dissipation, to amuse them, in their casual bursts of anger, by the sacrifice of some object of their aversion, to soothe their discontent by redoubled largesses, to allay their alarms of plague or famine by more extravagant shows and massacres in the circus. Or if at any time their murmurs took shape in action, or secret conspiracies against the government were detected, the arm of the emperor descended upon them swiftly and ruthlessly, and the severity of the punishment stunned and laid them in the dust.

Conscious of their power to repress disaffection, it was not therefore the policy of the emperors ostentatiously to prevent it. For this reason we find that they made no effort to impose restraints upon thought. Freedom of thought may be checked in two ways, and modern despotism resorts in its restless jealousy to both. The one is, to guide ideas by seizing on the channels of education; the other, to subject their utterance to the control of a censorship. In neither one way nor the other did Augustus or Nero interfere at all. From the days of the republic the system of education had been perfectly untrammelled. It was simply a matter of arrangement between the parties directly interested, the teacher and the learner. Neither state nor church pretended to take any concern in it: neither priest nor magistrate regarded it with the slightest jealousy. Public opinion ranged, under ordinary circumstances, in perfect freedom, and under its unchecked influence both the aims and methods of education continued long to be admirably adapted to make

Freedom of  
thought among  
the Romans.

System of edu-  
cation inde-  
pendent of  
priests or mag-  
istrates.

intelligent men and useful citizens. The end of the highest education among the Romans was to fit a man for the discharge of his public duties. But, in theory at least, they took a very liberal view of public duty, and conceived that every thing which refined and enlarged his intellectual powers made him a wiser legislator and an abler magistrate. At the age of seven, or sometimes a few years later, the child began his course of public instruction on the benches of the Grammarian. From him he learned to read and speak his own language step by step with the Greek, and imbued his memory with the thoughts and language of the classics of either tongue, from Homer to Ennius or Virgil. At fourteen, or as soon as the powers of thought began to unfold themselves, he was transferred to the school of the Rhetorician, where he first began to concentrate his studies upon the future business of his life. He was to be made a public man, and therefore above all things a public speaker. He was to be trained for a perfect orator, by declamation, by writing, by careful study of the best models, by constant exercise in rivalry with his schoolfellows. But it was not the mere trick of action, or knack of speaking, that he was to acquire: he was to be thoroughly informed with the matter requisite for his calling. Every branch of knowledge might sometimes have its application: every art and science might serve on occasion to illustrate the topics presented to him for discussion: and, if any were too remote from the sphere of forensic eloquence, they would serve at least to expand the mind of the pupil, to give breadth and depth and height to his understanding. Among these sciences, however, there was one which held the highest place, one which for its pre-eminence among them deserved to be removed from the circle of the rhetorician's instructions, and entrusted to the care of a special teacher. At seventeen, or when the fated struggle begins between the moral principles and the instincts of appetite,—at the commencement, such as morality and religion have represented it, of the great battle of life between vice and virtue,—the youth was transferred to the academy

*Its extent and liberality.*

of the Philosopher or Sophist, to learn the mysteries of the Good, the Fair, and the Honourable.<sup>1</sup> While he still continued to exercise himself daily in rhetorical studies and practice, he explored the dark by-ways of morals and metaphysics under accomplished teachers, and traversed perhaps the whole circuit of Grecian speculation before he determined in which sect definitively to enrol himself.

Such a course of education, it must be allowed, was nobly conceived; and at the hands of the Romans it received fair play; for it was warped by no sectarian prejudices, nor confined by narrow notions of state policy. At first, indeed, the government looked with distrust on the new science of the rhetoricians, and the strange doctrines of the sophists from beyond the sea: the stern republic of Cato suspected the tendencies of a learning imported by the effeminate parasites of conquered Greece. But even these camp-prejudices were transient, and in the later times of the Free State the intellect of the Roman youth was allowed to be developed without restraint, and undoubtedly with no common success. The Roman men of affairs were generally men of well-trained understandings. Their soldiers could speak and write as well as command. Their knowledge of ideas and letters was wide in its range, though perhaps their views had little depth, and still less originality. But there is something very remarkable in the ease with which they could turn from the active to the literary life, from study to composition, from speaking to speculation. With the fall of freedom the sphere of eloquence became lamentably restricted, and oratory degenerated into mere declamation: the subjects to which the learner was directed were frivolous, and the nature of his preparation in art was no doubt less discursive and complete.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, even under the empire, the education of youth bore honourable fruit. It created men of

High training  
of public men  
at Rome under  
the Free State.

Not materially  
lowered under  
the empire.

<sup>1</sup> Thus Persius, at twelve years, entered the school of the grammarian Paccimon; thence he went to the rhetor Virginius; and finally, at sixteen, to the philosopher Cornutus.—Suet. *vit. Pers.*

<sup>2</sup> For the subjects of declamation compare what has been said in chap. x<sup>1</sup>.

letters if not practical statesmen; it sharpened the intellect, formed habits of industry, enlivened thought, and fostered a variety of interests, and an aptitude for manifold pursuits. It continued as before to be exercised with perfect freedom. The most jealous of the Cæsars made no attempt to control it, to dictate its subjects and prescribe its methods. Its text-books were still, as ever, the most famous compositions of re-

Declamation in  
praise of lib-  
erty and tyrannicide.

publican Greece; the favourite topics of its declamations were the glories and virtues of the freemen of antiquity, and the praise of tyrannicide resounded from all its benches.<sup>1</sup> Even the milder method of guiding education, by enlisting salaried professors in the interest of the government, was not discovered till a later period; even then we shall find reason to question whether it was adopted as a precaution of state policy, or rather as a cheap subordination of flattery.

The same indulgence which was extended to education smiled upon the literature which flowed so copiously from it.

No restrictions  
on freedom of  
writing.

There was no restriction on writing or publication at Rome analogous to our censorships and licensing acts. The fact that books were copied by the hand, and not printed for general circulation, seems to

and see Tacitus, *Dial. de Orat.* 35.: "Sequitur ut materiæ abhorrenti a veritate declamatio quoque adhibeatur. Sic fit ut *tyrannicidarum præmia*, aut *vitiatum electiones*, aut *pestilentie remedia*, aut *incesta matram*, aut quicquid in schola quotidie agitur, in foro vel raro vel nunquam, ingentibus verbis persequantur;" and Petron. *Satyr.* 1.: "Et ideo adulescentulos existimo in scholis stultissimos fieri, quia nihil ex iis quæ in usu habemus aut audiunt aut vident, sed piratas cum catenis in litore stantes, sed *tyrannos* edicta scribentes," &c.

<sup>1</sup> The well-known line of Juvenal,

"Cum perimit sævos classis numerosa tyrannos,"

is confirmed by Tacitus above cited, and by the subjects of some of the declamations ascribed to Quintilian, which have come down to us. The only exceptions to this licence of teaching mentioned in history, are the case of Carrinas Secundus, banished by Caius for declaiming in favour of tyrannicide (Dion, lix. 20.), and of the rhetor Virginius and the philosopher Musonius Rufus, proscribed by Nero, as Tacitus says, on account of their influence over youth, but ostensibly implicated in the conspiracy of Piso.—*Ann.* xv. 71.

present no real difficulty to the enforcement of such restrictions, had it been the wish of the government to enforce them. The noble Roman, indeed, surrounded by freedmen and clients of various ability, by rhetoricians and sophists, poets and declaimers, had within his own doors private aid for executing his literary projects; and when his work was compiled, he had in the slaves of his household the hands for multiplying copies, for dressing and binding them, and sending forth an edition, as we should say, of his work to the select public of his own class or society.<sup>1</sup> The circulation of compositions thus manipulated might be to some extent surreptitious and secret. But such a mode of proceeding was necessarily confined to few. The ordinary writer must have had recourse to a professional publisher, who undertook, as a tradesman, to present his work for profit to the world. Upon these agents the government might have had all the hold it required: yet it never demanded the sight beforehand of any speech, essay, or satire which was advertised as about to appear. It was still content to punish after publication what it deemed to be censurable excesses. Severe and arbitrary as some of its proceedings were in this respect, of which instances have been already recorded, it must be allowed that these prosecutions of written works were rare and exceptional, and that the traces we discover of the freedom of letters, even under the worst emperors, leave on the whole a strong impression of the general leniency of their policy in this particular.<sup>2</sup>

The fear, indeed, of such retrospective censorship had damped the ardour of men of letters through the dark days of Tiberius, and no man coveted eminence as a writer under the tyranny of his successor, who proscribed Homer and Virgil, and scowled with envious moroseness upon every kind of excellence. But Claudius was a patron of letters, perhaps not

This indulgence accepted in compensation for restriction upon public action.

<sup>1</sup> See *Corn. Nep. in Att.* 13.; *Cic. ad Att.* iv. 4. 5. 8., xiii. 12. 44.

<sup>2</sup> The patience of Nero under the bitterest pasquinades is remarked but not explained by Suetonius, *Ner.* 39.: "Mirum et vel præcipue notabile inter hæc



an unenlightened patron. Historical composition flourished again under the auspices of the imperial historian. The accession of Nero, youthful and benign to every talent, was the signal for renewed activity in all departments of literature, particularly in the lighter, such as might expect special countenance from the favourite of Apollo. Undoubtedly the licence which was extended to writings at this period was accepted by the mass of the rising generation of educated men, as compensation for the restraints imposed on them in active life. While the interchange of thought was free, or appeared so, they might fondly persuade themselves that they were freemen themselves. Here, at least, the traditions of the republic were unbroken.

Nor are we to suppose that the circle of readers was so small that the government could safely despise the influence of an unpalatable composition. Whatever was its extent it was coincident, at least, with the class of which the government was naturally most jealous. The publications of Rome were perused no doubt by the senators, the knights, and the freedmen of the city: there is evidence to show that in many cases they penetrated far into the provinces, and for some kinds of writings, at least, there was a regular sale at Lugdunum, or any other provincial capital.<sup>1</sup> Some curious calculations have been made, to show that the rapidity with which copies could be multiplied by hand from dictation was little less than that of printing. It is not impossible that a limited number of copies, a hundred for instance, could be written

luit, nihil eum patientius quam maledicta et convicia hominum tulisse, neque in ullos leniorem, quam qui se dictis aut carminibus lacessissent, exstitisse." He proceeds to cite examples, some of which have been quoted in the preceding chapter.

<sup>1</sup> The authorities on this subject are collected, but with little critical discrimination, by Adolf Schmidt. *Denk und Glaubensfreiheit*, pp. 116. 125. The younger Pliny, as a metropolitan man of letters, imagined there could be no such thing as a bookseller at Lugdunum; he was the more pleased to learn that his own compositions were on sale there, among the latest publications of the trade at Rome. See *Epist.* ix. 11.

off quicker in this way in the librarian's workshop, than a single one could be set up in type by the printer. This, of course, supposes the employment of a multitude of scribes; but these were slaves cheaply purchased and maintained at little cost.<sup>1</sup> The exceedingly low price of books at Rome, if we may take the poems of a popular author as an example, show that the labour must have been much less or much cheaper than we usually imagine.<sup>2</sup> The world of Roman society, the circles of rank and fashion, in the city and its neighbourhood, were permeated by the published thoughts of their favourite writers with electric speed and electric diffusiveness.<sup>3</sup> It would be too much to dignify with the name of devotion to literature the aptitude of the educated Roman for the use of his style and tablets. No doubt the vice of the system of instruction imparted to him was its tendency to degenerate into the conning of facts, maxims, and the commonplaces of the schools, rather than the cultivation of thought. Trained from childhood to observe and imitate, he was versed in all the forms of literature, while he lacked perhaps the ideas to fill them. Hence the facility with which mere children, as in the cases more than once referred to, produced set orations on hackneyed subjects. With their

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt's remarks on this subject are well worth considering. He says boldly, "was in der Gegenwart für die Literatur die Presse ist, das war im Alterthum die Sklaverei," p. 119. Certainly the means possessed by the ancients for multiplying copies were far beyond those of the middle ages.

<sup>2</sup> For the exceeding cheapness of the most popular books see Martial, i. 118: "*Denarius tibi quinque Martiale.*" It would seem that a copy of one book at least of Martial (about 700 lines), smoothed with pumice, and elegantly bound, was sold for 3s. 4d.; a plainer copy (comp. i. 67.) for about 1s. 6d., or (xiii. 3.) even for 4d., and still leave a profit to the bookseller:

"Omnis in hoc gracili Xeniorum turba libello

Constabit nummis quatuor excepta tibi.

Quatuor est nimium: poterit constare duobus;

Et faciet lucrum bibliopola Tryphon."

<sup>3</sup> One book of Martial (540 verses) could be transcribed in an hour (ii. 1. 5.): "*hæc una peragit librarius hora.*" On the rapidity of writing Schmidt quotes Galen, *De Cogn. Morb.* c. 9., which shows that shorthand was in common use for published books. Schmidt, pp. 132. 136.

notebooks crammed with the accumulated jottings from a long course of dictations, they were prepared to produce, at short notice, passable exertations on any ordinary topic. Ovid, speaking of the precocity of his poetical talent, tells us that in childhood his thoughts ran spontaneously in verse; and the phrases with which the tablets or the memory of the Romans were stored might seem of their own accord to take the form of continuous composition. Almost every distin-

Facilities attending the composition and multiplication of books.

guished man among them seems to have kept his journal or Ephemerides; to have made collections of wise and witty sayings; to have turned some of his observations on men and things into verse; to have strung together a volume of miscellaneous extracts from his reading; and the transcription of a few copies of these stray leaves constituted the publication of

Characteristics of the popular literature of the time.

a book. With the character of the common literature of the day the Cæsarean government had every selfish reason to be satisfied. It was engrossing; it occupied many restless minds to the exclusion of all dangerous subjects, either of action or reflection. It seems to have been lively; it was, at least, fascinating. It was generally voluptuous, to enervate the strong and daring; it was satisfied with a low range of topics, leaving loftier themes to reserved and solitary genius. Such was the kind of literature in which Nero himself was ambitious of shining; such were the writings he could best appreciate. The few remaining verses which are ascribed to him, or supposed to be parodies upon him, seem to show that he was a proficient in the lilting metre and empty prettiness of expression which marked the poetical style of his tutor.<sup>1</sup> He is said, indeed, to have aspired to the fame of an historian, and to have taken for his subject the Affairs of Rome. His performance, however, never went beyond a consideration of the number of books to which the work should extend. The

<sup>1</sup> Seneca (*Nat. Qu.* i. 5.) quotes a verse of Nero's:—

“Colla Oytheriace splendent agitata columbae.”

The well-known lines in Persius, *Sat.* i., are not improbably parodies.

emperor, urged a flatterer, should not deign to compose less than four hundred volumes on the imperial theme. The Stoic Cornutus bluntly suggested that the public would not read a work so prolix. Yet, replied Nero, *your master Chrysippus wrote as many books.* . . . *But they at least, returned the sage, were of some use to mankind.*<sup>1</sup>

But whatever the truth of this story may be, the Romans of this age were not solely triflers in the drama, in epigram and fugitive poetry; men were found not only to write but to read vast compilations of history,

Fashion of historical composition.

now known to us only by the number of volumes they are said to have filled. The works of the emperor Claudius, of Servilius Nonianus, and Aufidius Bassus, attest the patient labour of these men of letters; men who must have looked for reputation rather from the recitation of their compositions, book by book, to select audiences, than to their wide dissemination by the labour of copyists. An account of the life and studies of the elder Pliny, the type of Roman industry at the same time both in affairs and letters, will find its proper place at a later period; but we may here remark that during the reign

Extraordinary literary activity of the elder Pliny.

of Nero this distinguished man, after holding for many years a military command in Germany, was devoting himself to study in retirement, meditating a history of the German wars which he deemed it inexpedient to put on paper in times of tyranny, composing a work on grammar and a treatise on the literary life, accumulating extracts from his reading or notes of his thoughts and conversation which extended at his death to a hundred and sixty volumes, and preparing slowly and methodically, from the perusal of many hundreds of works, the wonderful encyclopædia of Roman arts and learning which he published eventually under the name of the Natural History.

The noble Roman chafed indeed at the restraints which prudence prescribed him in the relation of contemporary

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lxi. 29.

Discourage-  
ment of con-  
temporary his-  
tory.

events, in which truth could seldom be told without impugning the conduct of men in power, court favourites or court parasites, if it did not hit the blots in the character of Cæsar himself. It was still more galling, perhaps, to leave the field open to the flatterers and intriguers who debased history into mere panegyric, and filled the ear of Rome with unblushing falsehood. The harsh repression exercised towards the utterers of the truth in this particular, had deterred the most honourable men from her ill-requited service, and checked the licence of remark on the personages around him which the Roman magnate cherished as his birthright. To many this restraint on personal criticism was the sorest point in their servitude. But with this exception the mind of the educated classes still flowed freely enough in the well-worn channels of literature, and the stability of the government was no doubt, in a great degree, founded on the ease and freedom with which the men of letters moved in their chains, and their general acquiescence in the position assigned them.<sup>1</sup>

The class, never numerous at Rome, which interested itself in moral speculations, had enjoyed remarkable freedom from interference at the hands of constituted authority. The proud aristocracy of the senate was little troubled by the nervous alarms at heterodoxy, so common to half-instructed democracies, full of prejudices, and conscious of their want of skill and learning to defend them. Hence, except once or twice, at moments of great intellectual disturbance, the government of the Free State had suffered the philosophers to teach as they pleased, and put no restraints on the spirit of inquiry which was sapping the positive beliefs of the day. If it ever evinced any jealousy of the new teaching, it was against the Greek foreigner, not against the heretic, against the

Alliance of  
philosophy at  
Rome with re-  
ligion and gov-  
ernment.

<sup>1</sup> It is fair to remark, on the other hand, that the strictures of contemporary history were not checked at Rome, as among ourselves within recent times, by the code of honour, nor practically at least, as it would appear, by a law of libel.

enemy of Rome, not the enemy of the gods, that it was directed. The full establishment of the Roman power in the East was followed by complete acquiescence in the teaching, however liberal and daring, which flowed from that source to the West. From the last century of the republic all attempt at interference ceased. The young Roman noble was initiated, as a matter of course, in the contentions of the Academy and the Lyceum; he traversed the inevitable career from doubt to rationalism, and from rationalism to doubt again; while neither priests nor magistrates complained of the new sphere of ideas into which he was launched, sure, as they were, to extinguish in his mind the old belief of his countrymen. All the Grecian schools agreed at least in one thing, namely, to inculcate outward respect for established forms of religion as an instrument of government. It might be curious to trace the origin of this peculiar feature in their teaching; whether it was a prudent concession to the demands of the authorities, under which they taught; whether they were unconsciously swayed by the apprehension that in the uncertainty which confessedly hung over their own undetermined principles, the Voice of the People might be after all a faint echo of the Voice of God: but so it was that Stoic, Epicurean, Peripatetic and Eclectic, all consented to practise on public occasions the rites which they not less openly derided in their speaking and writing. The compromise was certainly effectual, at least to a late period.

Modern despotisms are charged with allowing the freest licence of religious discussion, not in the interest of truth, but as a necessary compensation for the silence they impose upon all discussion on politics.<sup>1</sup> It will be seen that if Roman imperialism is liable to the same charge, it was at least no new inven-

Attitude of opposition to government first assumed by the Stoics under the empire.

<sup>1</sup> This charge, so commonly made against certain Continental governments at the present day, and with peculiar force against the old monarchy of France (see De Tocqueville's instructive book, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, liv. ii. ch. 11., liv. iii. ch. 2.), may be extended, I conceive, with equal truth to oligarchies generally.

tion of tyranny. The Sceptic and the Atheist had been allowed full scope under the government of the senate, and the Cæsars, in leaving religion still open to their attacks, only followed the state tradition bequeathed them from the republic. The philosophers, however, while they accepted freedom as their right, were not bound thereby to keep terms with the government which condescended to grant it. They had a higher mission, and a corresponding sense of duty. With the gross and immoral practices, indeed, allowed, encouraged, sometimes even prescribed, by the Pagan superstitions, philosophy did not concern herself. She did not stoop to inform or amend the ignorant rabble of the temple-worshippers: but the opposition between her and the government, when the government became flagrantly wicked and tyrannical, was more and more openly avowed. The wisdom of the Porch was not the antagonist of vulgar vices; but her precepts, addressed to the ruling classes of the empire, stood forth in bold and startling hostility to the principles of existing authority. The city of the Stoics was the city of God, not the city of Cæsar. The empire for which they sighed on earth was the empire of the best and wisest, of the oligarchs of reason, not the empire of the blind ignoble multitude impersonated in the tribune of its choice. Christian moralists have taunted Stoicism with the hopeless distance at which it stood from the sympathies of mankind in general. Such, they say, is the nature of man, that it requires the prospect of reward, here or hereafter, as an efficient stimulus to virtue. This argument is probably true, and as a general proposition no doubt the Stoics would have also admitted it. But, having themselves no assurance of any such retributive Providence, they aimed at raising the choicest spirits from the common level to a higher standard of excellence, and inculcated duty without reward as the end of existence, not as a religion for the many, but as a philosophy for the few. Shocked as their nobler instincts were at the vile degradation of the multitude, they conceived the Truth as something unappreciable by it. Could the Truth have been made intelligible to mankind in

general, it would, in their view, have ceased to be Truth at all. And this, after all, was very similar to the view of Christianity itself entertained by some of our primitive teachers. Tertullian in a striking passage asserted broadly that the Cæsars would long since have been converted to Christianity, if Christians could be themselves Cæsars, that is, if government could be Christian.<sup>1</sup> Christianity, he conceived, must always stand apart from the ordinary march of affairs; the true faith could only be the faith of a chosen congregation; mankind in general were equally incapable of moral renovation and of spiritual conversion.

Let the Stoics, then, be judged solely by what they attempted. Their aims were high, but not wide-reaching. They sought to make some men more than human, but there was no question with them of the few or the many. They boasted that their pre-ternatural standard of holiness was not absolutely unattainable, and if they could point to a single Cato or a single Thræsea, as having attained to it, their problem was solved, their principle was established. Virtue had become impersonate. Man had become God. The end of creation was accomplished. Even from the attempt to accomplish this end, however imperfectly, other blessings might flow, indirectly and collaterally: though, indeed, by the true mystic of the Porch these were little heeded. The aspirations, however, of the Stoics in general were really less visionary and unpractical. They descended from the clouds to earth to impregnate with noble and fruitful principles such forms of government as were actually accessible to them. Captivated as they often were by the aspect of the law, as the exponent of the Divine Will, the representative of Divine Justice upon earth, they devoted themselves to moulding it to their notions, and informed it with wise and lofty maxims. Stoicism enlarged the minds of its worthy votaries by purer conceptions of Deity, and more liberal views of humanity, teaching

Principles on  
which Stoicism  
is to be judged.

<sup>1</sup> Tertull. *Apo'g.* 21.: "Sed et Cæsares credidissent super Christo, si aut Cæsares non essent sæculo necessari, aut si Christiani potuissent esse Cæsares."



the unity of God with man, and of men with one another, asserting the supremacy of the Will over the Passions, of Mind over Matter, of eternal Duty over temporal Expediency. It sublimed every aspiration after the Good, the Just, the Honourable, by pronouncing it the instinct of divinity within us. The immortality of the soul, the triumph of the Righteous, a fleeting Present and an illimitable Future, these indeed were doctrines which some Stoics held, some perhaps ventured to teach dogmatically: but they were not the true vital principles of the sect; they savoured too much of offering bribes to virtue, they were, in short, too popular, to seduce the sterner preachers of a morality which must have no regard either to punishment on the one hand, or reward on the other.<sup>1</sup>

Galling indeed to the selfish voluptuaries of the palace must have been the bold and even ostentatious preaching of these soul-stirring doctrines, which seemed to proclaim a higher freedom than that of the body, a nobler existence than that of the world and the flesh.<sup>2</sup> Whatever there was of ardour, of generosity and self-devotion, among the Roman youth at this era of national torpor, was absorbed in the strong current of Stoicism. The Epicurism of the earlier empire had been the plea of men who were ashamed of the renunciation they had made of their independence. But since independence had become a mere phantom of the past, the philosophy which

Stoicism attractive at this period to the noblest characters at Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, says M. Denis (*Idees Morales dans l'Antiquité*, ii. 253.), faithful to the old traditions of the Porch, speak but faintly and obscurely on the immortality of the soul. The only philosophers who formally admit it are Seneca, Plutarch, and Maximus Tyrius; the former as a matter of hope, the others as an incontestable dogma.

<sup>2</sup> The expression "the flesh" for human passions, which has been almost appropriated to Christian teaching, is found at this time in Seneca. In the *Consolatio ad Marciam*, c. 24., he says, as St. Paul might have said: "Animo cum carne grave certamen." Comp. Persius, *Sat.* ii. in fin.:

"Et bona Dis ex hac scelerata ducere pulpa."

It had been already used commonly by Philo, who took it perhaps from the Septuagint. *Sirac.* xxiii. 23.

excused men for deserting it was no longer specially attractive; while Stoicism, which could substitute a higher object in its place, assumed in its turn the ascendant. Under the Free State it had generally been admitted that the maxims of the Porch, stiff and harsh as they were, ill accorded with the conduct of public affairs, and the government of mankind in general. The experience, perhaps the instinct, of the free-born Roman assured him that a man could not be an active and useful citizen, and at the same time the disciple of a speculative Puritanism. The pretensions of the jurist Sulpicius to unite the two characters had moved the derision of Cicero: the attempt of Cato had issued in more serious consequences; it had hastened the fall of the republic. But these men had few admirers or followers in their own day. It was under the empire, when man's free will had no longer scope for action, that the philosophy which exalted Fate above all human affairs found acceptance with thoughtful and melancholy idlers. Stoicism became a consolation for inactivity not a stimulus to action. Views of the highest wisdom which led men's speculations away from the deceitful shows of life, and fixed them upon ideal excellences, might be an object of suspicion to the government; they might be interpreted by timid and jealous rulers as discontent with existing circumstances, disaffection towards the empire, a disposition to change and innovation. Nevertheless, the charge against them, which Tacitus supposes to have been urged by Tigellinus, that they made men restless and ambitious meddlers with affairs, is strongly belied by all we read about the most genuine and consistent professors of Stoicism at this period at Rome.<sup>1</sup> Possibly it is not intended to express the opinion of the author himself: possibly it is directed against the false pretenders to the title, or the ardent patriots who failed to recognise the purely spiritual character of its precepts. Seneca seems,

The charge against it of contumaciousness and seditiousness not well grounded.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 57.: "Assumpta Stoicorum arrogantia, sectaque, quæ turbidos et negotiorum appetentes faciat."

at all events, to speak more accurately, when he says that they are in error who imagine that the true philosopher is contumacious, refractory, a despiser of magistrates and governments.<sup>1</sup> Even the notion, so commonly adopted, that the Stoics particularly devoted themselves to the science of law, and played a great part in constructing the fabric of Roman jurisprudence, is much mistaken or exaggerated.<sup>2</sup> The legal principles which can be traced to their moral maxims are but few; and, indeed, the reasoners who were bound to maintain the equality of all sins could hardly have interested themselves in the just apportionment of punishments to crimes. All enthusiasm, no doubt, is hateful to tyranny. The enthusiasm of the Stoics was to be feared, to be watched, to be controlled. Yet this sentiment, checked as it was by the force of circumstances, and the deadly apathy of society around it, passed in many noble spirits of the sect into a kind of quietism. They had no concern with the republic; they lived under the gods, not under Cæsar.<sup>3</sup> It became their aim and pride rather to bear all things than to dare any thing. They tried to persuade the emperor that he was a slave, but they made no attempt to deprive him of his sovereignty. Nero would smile, perhaps, at the declamations he heard on the splendid text of the poet: *Great Father of the Gods, punish Thou tyrants no other wise than thus: let them behold the Virtue they have abandoned, and pine away at the loss of her.*<sup>4</sup> On the

Political innocence of its professors.

<sup>1</sup> Senec. *Ep.* 78.: "Errare mihi videntur qui existimant philosophiæ fideliter deditos contumaces esse ac refractarios, et contemptores magistratuum."

<sup>2</sup> This remark is opposed to the common opinion of the commentators on Roman law, which the few and trifling coincidences which Heineccius discovers between the Stoic and the legal principles are surely not sufficient to justify. See *Antiqu. Rom.* i. i. 3. That under the early empire many juriconsults were Stoics would naturally follow from the prevalence of the Stoic philosophy among the highest order of minds at that period.

<sup>3</sup> So Apollonius of Tyana, himself an Eclectic, could say in the true spirit of the Stoics: *ἐμοὶ πολιτείας μὲν οὐδεμῶς μέλει· ζῶ γὰρ ὑπὸ τοῖς θεοῖς.*—Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* v. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Persius, *Sat.* iii. 35:—

whole, then, the philosophers were little offensive to the government. They enjoyed accordingly an impunity which they might mistake for deference. It was known, perhaps, that they were discredited among the masses of the people by the worthless character of the many hypocrites who assumed their name; and the emperors observed with complacency the popular suspicion under which the best men laboured, confounded as they too often were with notorious pretenders.<sup>1</sup> To a late period in Nero's reign they remained, as we have seen, entirely unmolested: it was not till they were urged by patriotism or humanity to engage in the intrigues of political conspirators, that they became objects themselves of imperial hostility. Even then, the proscriptions fell on individuals only; it was never extended to the class: the schools were never closed, the teachers were never silenced, the principles were never condemned.<sup>2</sup> All this we shall witness at a later period; though Stoicism, we shall still remark, was

"Magne Pater Divum, sævos punire tyrannos . . . .  
Haud alia ratione velis . . . .  
Virtutem videant intabescantque relicta."

<sup>1</sup> Quintil. *proem. Inst.* i. "Veterum quidem sapientiæ professorum multos et honesta præcepisse, et ut præceperunt etiam vixisse, facile concesserim: nostris vero temporibus sub hoc nomine maxima in plerisque vitia latuerunt: non enim virtute et studiis ut haberentur philosophi laborabant, sed vultum et tristitiam, et dissentientem a cæteris habitum pessimis moribus prætendebant. Comp. Juvenal, ii. 3. :—

"Qui Curios simulant et Bacchanalia vivunt . . . .  
Fronti nulla fides," &c.

<sup>2</sup> Canus Julius, the Stoic, is reputed the first of the philosophers who suffered from the jealousy of the empire. The circumstances of his death, under Caius, are set forth with great pomp by Seneca (*Tranquill. Anim.* 14.); but the charges against him are not mentioned. Pætus suffered under Claudius, and many philosophers were sacrificed by Nero, but always for political offences. The notion that Nero banished the philosophers from Rome and Italy, though commonly asserted (see Imhof, *Domitianus*, p. 104.), is unquestionably erroneous. It rests merely on the assertion of the rhetorician Philostratus (*Vit. Apoll.* iv. 35.), but this Brucker (*Hist. Phil.* ii. 118.) very reasonably interprets of a prohibition of magic, to which Apollonius, according to his biographer pretended. See Newman on Apollon. Tyanæus, in the *Encycl. Metropolitana*.

not officially smitten, till it perversely attacked an indulgent prince and a liberal monarchy. The pupil of Seneca, at least, is guiltless of the persecution of his master's philosophy. I repeat that we must appreciate to its full extent the freedom of thought conceded by the empire, to understand the patience of the Romans under the restraint it placed upon action.

But these considerations apply only to the higher classes of the state, to which the exercise of the intellect was a privilege dearly prized, earned by toil, guarded with jealousy, esteemed the badge of their pre-eminence. Let us turn now to the subjects which interested the vulgar herd of the city and the provinces, and examine how far the liberty allowed in these respects might console them for the losses they sustained, when they placed themselves under a master's control. Little as even the multitude believed in the dogmas of the national religion, they were still devotedly attached to their ancient rites and usages; they required their rulers to pay outward deference to the gods, as symbols, at least, of truth, if not truth itself, actual and positive. The revival of religion by Augustus was not mere statecraft: it was the expression of a real want of the age, and it had great and lasting results. If it gave no genuine impulse to belief in the mind of the Romans, it nevertheless undoubtedly confirmed them for ages in practices which had all the signs, and some perhaps of the effects, of actual belief. It reanimated the spirit of worship and respect for superior existences. The current of men's spiritual affections continued to set steadily in the direction of ritual observance. The restoration, adorning, and multiplication of temples went on from Cæsar to Cæsar. The established sacrifices were offered, the appointed auspices observed, year by year continually. There is no apparent indication of a decrease in the number of temple-worshippers; though the stream of devotion might fluctuate towards rival fanes, it rolled on with undiminished force and volume.<sup>1</sup> The priesthood remained as grave and honourable

The revival of religion under Augustus to a great extent a genuine movement.

<sup>1</sup> This assertion is opposed to the general opinion, and writers on the sub-

a function as ever; the temples continued to receive lavish gifts and endowments. Though the most illustrious of the oracles fell into disuse, and the silence of Apollo at Delphi was ascribed to the growing sinfulness of the times by the pious apprehensions of the multitude, to the jealous policy of kings by the juster observation of political reasoners, the science of divination flourished with unabated luxuriance, and new prophets sprang into repute to attract the inquirers who were repelled from the voiceless tripods of the old.<sup>1</sup> The priests contrived to retain the submission of the vulgar, ever willingly persuaded, to their pretended communications with

ject have repeated one another, or appealed in succession to a common stock of texts in confirmation of a different view. I believe the texts in question are the following only: Propert. ii. 6. 35. :—

. . . . . "Velavit aranca fanum  
Et mala desertos occupat herba Deos;"

and iii. 13. 47. :—

"At nunc desertis cessant sacraria lucis,  
Aurum omnes victa jam pietate colunt;"

both of which, besides their rhetorical character, refer to a period antecedent to the revival we are considering. Philostratus, in *Vit. Apoll.* i. 2., says that some temples were refilled by his philosopher after having suffered desertion; but this does not refer to Rome or Italy. The passage in Pliny, *Ep.* v. 97., and Lucian, *Timon*, 4., refer, such as they are, to another period. Such are the slender authorities, however, which seem to satisfy Neander, *Kirchengeschichte*, i. 80.: Tzschirner, *Fall des Heidenthums*, 118.; and Schmidt, a sedulous collector of texts, *Denk und Glaubensfreiheit*, 168.

<sup>1</sup> On the silence of the Delphic oracle, Juvenal, vi. 555. :—

. . . . . "Delphis oracula cessant."

Lucan gives one reason which might be assigned for it: v. 118. :—

"Postquam reges timuere futura  
Et Superos vetuere loqui:"

And again, 140. :—

"Seu Pæan, solitus templis arcere nocentes,  
Ora quibus solvat nostro non invenit ævo."

Comp. Plutarch, *de Defectu Oraculorum*, 5. foll. Lucian, indeed, at a somewhat later period, seems to refer to Delphi as still prophetic: ἡ ψευδεὶς εἰσις τοῦ νῦν ἐκπύκτουτος καὶ χηρῶτος.—*Alexander*, 42. But possibly the work is not genuine.

heaven, by the fame of wonders worked by images or in temples, and still more by the supposed fulfilment of their auguries. It was the interest of the government to humour this submission under discreet regulations, and of its more enlightened subjects to humour the government itself by affecting to join in it, so that the populace became the victim of a double conspiracy. The policy of the state is freely disclosed to us in the counsels ascribed by Dion to Mæcenas, which no doubt represent in substance the views of the emperors and their advisers even at this period. *Be careful, he said, yourself to worship the gods always and everywhere, according to the customs of Rome, and compel others to do likewise; but detest and punish the promoters of strange religions, not for the sake of the gods only, but because such innovaters beguile men into foreign sentiments and customs, and hence arise plots, combinations, and clubs, which are especially dangerous to monarchy.*<sup>1</sup> To maintain the exclusive practice of the genuine Roman religion, if indeed it could be accurately defined, had been long deemed impossible under the republic. A compromise had been effected by granting toleration, sometimes by special decree, as in the case of the Jews, to certain foreign cults established in their own countries, which it seemed expedient to tolerate, or which had taken too deep root in Rome to be really extirpated. Any other practices or belief, however, that made their way into the city from abroad, must do so at their peril. They were liable at any moment to legal animadversion, and it required the enactment of no new, the rescinding of no old law, to expose them to proscription, whenever the jealousy of the monarchy, more sensitive than the Free State, was awakened against them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lii. 36. Comp. Cic. *de leg.* ii. 8.: "Separatim nemo habessit deos, neve novos, sive advenas, nisi publice adscitos, privatim colunto."

<sup>2</sup> Such was the distinction between the religiones licitæ and illicitæ. Tertullian, *Apol.* 4. 21.; Minucius Felix, *Octav.* 8. Judaism was licensed, though occasionally the licence was withdrawn, and its professors expelled from Rome by a special decree. Christianity, as we shall see, was unlicensed. It had no

The policy of Augustus, accordingly, in the matter of religion, was a more systematic enforcement of the principles of the republic, namely, to endow the state religion with emoluments and honours, to tolerate certain accredited foreign cults, but to forbid and repress all strange and novel usages. It was the attempt, in short, to cast the religious sentiments of the age in a mould, once for all, from which there should be no escape for the future.<sup>1</sup> The moment might appear well chosen for such an attempt, when in the prevailing fusion of nations and opinions, and the widespread disappointment of moral and religious speculations, men seemed content to rest from all further experiment in a decently-veiled atheism or pantheism. Such an attempt seems to have succeeded for once in the history of China; but it was singularly ill-timed, as became speedily apparent, in the age and clime which witnessed the origin of Christianity. And, indeed, not yet to advert to the phenomenon of the Christian revelation, the spiritual activity of the human mind throughout the East, at this moment, was such as to defy the control of the emperor's or the prætor's edicts. The ideas of Druidism, the religion of the West, were almost powerless. In Rome they collapsed instantaneously; in the cities of Gaul they yielded without a struggle to Roman forms and nomenclature: it was only in the deep woods and silent plains that they retained a spark of vitality. Not so the Syrian elemental-worship; not so the moral convictions of Judaism and Tsabaism. The crowds which flocked to Rome from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean brought with them practices and prejudices hardly worthy, perhaps, to be called legal standing in Rome, and, not being a national religion, I presume it had no legal standing anywhere. I merely allude to this subject here to mark the distinction.

Position of the Roman religion in relation to the superstitions of Gaul and Syria respectively.

<sup>1</sup> It may be worth while to remind the reader of the three constituent elements of the Roman religion: 1. the service of the old Sabine or Italian divinities; 2. the aruspical discipline, &c., derived principally from Etruria; 3. the cult of certain foreign deities introduced generally by the advice of special oracles (publice ascitos), such as those of Ceres, Æsculapius, and Cybele.



beliefs, which disdained amalgamation with Italian paganism, and however distorted they might be from their original types, acknowledged no constraining influence from the opinions and usages around them. The stronger sentiment, as usual, attracted and controlled the weaker. Jupiter had conquered Hesus and Taranis, but he was a child in the hands of Mithras and Melcarth. The broader forms of the Syrian religion, as established in its native countries, were tolerated in Rome; and from toleration they advanced without pause or hesitation on a career of active proselytism. The symbolic rites of Cybele and Astarte invaded the streets and the forum, and carried off crowds of worshippers from the shrines of Juno and Diana. But they too were tolerant in their turn, and demanded no exclusive devotion from their converts: the idleness and wealth of Rome could afford time and means for the celebration of many new ceremonies in addition to the simple *performance of divine service* which its own religion prescribed.<sup>1</sup> They offered, and herein was the secret of their success, a mental excitement without the fatigue and agitation of argument. In philosophy no step could be taken without some use of the reasoning powers; every man held his opinions in defiance of all opponents; even the schools of oratory as well as of philosophy had their sects, their masters, their maxims, and their disputations. The noble Roman, indeed, for the most part entertained a professional sophist to think and argue for him: nevertheless it was not till he abandoned his philosophy for his religion that he was completely relieved from intellectual toil and discipline; and doubtless the outward observance of ritual forms was in a great degree the refuge to which he fled from the painful questions of morals and metaphysics. The curious and sometimes awful

<sup>1</sup> "Rem divinam facere," to perform holy rites, consisted in the occasional sacrifice, the daily burning of incense and casting of salt and flour into the flame, the one in the temples, the other on the domestic hearth or altar. The more public solemnities, such as processions, hymns, and musical services, together with the fasts and vigils appropriated to foreign divinities, were generally less familiar to the Roman ritual.

rites of initiation, the tricks of the magicians, the pretended virtues of charms and amulets, the riddles of emblematical idolatry, enshrined in the form of brutes or monsters half-brute half-human, with which the superstitions of the East abounded, amused the languid interests of the voluptuary who, as has been well remarked, had neither the energy for a moral belief, nor the boldness requisite for a logical scepticism.<sup>1</sup>

While the men's minds were still too hardy to submit to these voluptuous excitements, the women had thrown themselves into them with all the passionate self-abandonment of their weaker natures. Uninstructed, ill-treated, half-employed, yet vain of the outward show of deference the laws and habits of the age continued to accord them, the Roman matrons followed these frivolous novelties with a fervour which scandalized their supercilious lords. They rushed from the sordid constraint of their lives at home to the licentious freedom of the veiled orgy and masquerading procession. In them they sought too for spiritual consolation, and they found, at least, an occupation and an interest.<sup>2</sup> And beyond this their imaginations were kindled with ideas of communion with the Deity, and exaltation above earthly things, which made them the dupes of charlatans, the prey of ribald intriguers. The story of the unscrupulous gallant who gained possession of his mistress by personating the god Anubis with the connivance and aid of the priests, is one instance recorded, out of many, no doubt, which have passed into oblivion, of the crimes and injuries which vexed the souls of the Roman hus-

The Roman women fascinated by the orgies and ceremonies of the Eastern cults,

<sup>1</sup> Such is nearly the expression of De Broglie in speaking on this subject, in his *l'Eglise et l'Empire*, l. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo may have pointed his general remark on the superior devotion of the female sex from personal observation: πάντες γὰρ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας ἀρχηγὸς οἰοῦνται τὰς γυναῖκας· αὐταὶ δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἀνδρας προκαλοῦνται πρὸς τὰς ἐπὶ πλεον̄ θεραπείας τῶν θεῶν, καὶ ἑορτὰς, καὶ ποτνιασμούς· σπάνιον δ' εἶ τις ἀνὴρ κατ' αὐτὸν ζῶν ἐπίσκειται τοιοῦτος.—vil. 3. p. 297 See Lipsius on Tac. Ann. xiii. 32.

bands.<sup>1</sup> Augustus had already banished the Egyptian rites from Rome; but they triumphed over his decrees. Tiberius repeated the same experiment on the submission of their devotees; he caused the temples of Isis to be razed, and even, it is said, executed her priests.<sup>2</sup> But the men were now following in the train of the women. The effeminacy of the times involved both sexes in the same vortex of superstition; the Nile-Gods continued to fascinate their votaries with charms which could not be dissolved; the idol of the bleary-eyed Egyptian still brandished the terrors of her cymbal, and threatened with blindness the perjurer of the forum.<sup>3</sup> The rites of the Syrian Goddess, if less dangerous than the Isiac to morals and less insulting to the majesty of the Roman household, were perhaps even more degrading. They were more attractive, it would seem, to the lower classes than to the patrician rulers of the state, and thereby escaped the same animadversion. The priests of Astarte roamed from village to village, carrying their sacred image on an ass's back, and at every halt attracted the gaping rustics with the strains of their flutes, danced in a circle round the goddess with their hair dripping

which at length  
prevail over the  
men also.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 3. A Roman knight, Decius Mundus, had tried in vain to seduce Paulina by presents and flatteries. One of his female slaves promised to gain him the object of his passion, and bribed the priests of Isis, whom Paulina worshipped. The priests assure the devotee that Anubis had promised to appear to her. She hastens delighted to the temple; the doors are closed, the lights extinguished, the god reveals himself and demands favours which she dares not deny. Mundus boasts that he has enjoyed her under the semblance of the god. She discloses the injury to her husband, who complains to the emperor Tiberius. Mundus is banished, the priests crucified, the temple overthrown.

<sup>2</sup> The cults of Egypt, with their allegorical monsters and hideous symbols, were peculiarly hateful to the Romans, who regarded such superstitions as abnormal. But political jealousy contributed to this exceptional treatment, for they do not seem to have been always excluded from the *religiones licite*, or licensed observances.

<sup>3</sup> Juvenal, xiii. 93. :—

“Decernat quodcumque volet de corpore nostro  
Isis, et irato feriat mea lumina sistro.”

with unguents, cut themselves with knives and swords, and dashed their own blood around them, handing finally a cap from rank to rank for the pence, figs, or crusts of the admiring spectators.<sup>1</sup> The obscene mutilation of the priests of Cybele excited still more astonishment, mingled, no doubt, with superstitious terror; but though, as the Mother of the Gods, she was honoured by the Roman matrons with the solemn feast of the Megalesia, the frantic asceticism of her Eastern devotees found probably no imitators among the manlier sons of Italy.

The apologists for polytheism had not yet proclaimed their theory that all the various gods of various nations were only diverse representations of the same Essential Unity. They had gone no further than to countenance the politic interpretations of Cæsar and Augustus, who announced to their Gaulish subjects that Belenus and Teutates were merely other names for Apollo and Mercury. Nevertheless, amidst the distraction of the religious sentiment between its thousands of devotional objects, the time had come for some faint and timid appreciation of the idea of the Divine Unity presented by the nobler theology of the Jews. The Jewish religion had come first under the close observation of the Romans after the conquest of Palestine by Pompeius. Some thousands of the inhabitants had been carried off into slavery, and of these a large proportion, reserved perhaps to grace the conqueror's triumph, had been sold in the Roman markets. Several princes of the nation had been retained as hostages; and these personages, who were treated with great show of courtesy, were allowed, no doubt, the attendance of clients of their own race. The way to the capital of the world was opened, and the Jews continued to flock thither of their own accord: they were impelled by their thirst of

The time arrived for appreciating the idea of the Divine Unity, the essential dogma of Judaism.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *Lucius*, 32. Apuleius, *Metamorph.* viii. in fin., describes these proceedings with his usual animation. His scene is laid beyond the Adriatic, yet there seems no reason to doubt that these ribaldries were imported into Italy

lucre and their restless industry : yet they possessed, as far as we know, no special arts or aptitude, like the Greeks or Egyptians, for making themselves necessary or acceptable visitors at the doors of the native Italians. Much did the Romans marvel at the swarms of these uncouth adventurers, with their deeply-marked physiognomy, their strong national feelings, their far-reaching reminiscences of past glory, their proud anticipation of a more splendid future, their exclusive usages, their vacant fanes, their incommunicable Deity. They thronged together in particular quarters of the city, which they almost made their own :<sup>1</sup> their numbers soon amounted to many thousands, and the turbulence which was early remarked as characteristic of them, caused the senate to regard them with jealousy, its orators to denounce them as dangerous subjects. But they were fortunate in finding patrons, first in Cæsar and afterwards in Augustus, who secured them the free exercise of their religion, countenanced their assemblies, made gifts to their temple, and even admitted them along with the citizens of the republic to a share in the largesses of corn.<sup>2</sup> If the distribution took place on their Sabbath, the Jews were allowed to apply for their share on the day following. The mysteriousness of their belief, or rather, perhaps, the earnestness of its devotees, exercised an extraordinary influence on the Roman mind. Amidst many public expressions of hatred and disgust, knights and senators still turned towards it with curiosity, interest, and awe. In Palestine rude centurions lowered their ensigns before its symbols, or built synagogues for its worshippers. In Rome the name of its first expounder

The Jews in  
Rome patron-  
ized by the first  
Cæsars.

<sup>1</sup> Philo, *Leg. ad Cai.* p. 1014. : Τὴν πέραν τοῦ Τιβέρεως ποταμοῦ μεγάλην ρῆς 'Ρόμης ἀποτομὴν . . . κατεχομένην καὶ οἰκουμένην πρὸς 'Ιουδαίων. Most of them, it is added, were captives who had been enfranchised, and had become Roman citizens.

<sup>2</sup> Philo, *Leg. ad Cai.* p. 1015. This is an important fact for the consideration of those who estimate the number of the citizens from the number of these recipients of corn. According to Josephus,—but allowance must be made for his spirit of exaggeration,—no less than 8000 Jews resident in Rome joined on one occasion in a petition to Augustus. Joseph. *Antiq.* xvii. 11. 1.

was held in honour; its sacred books were not unknown, the glowing imagery of their poetry was studied and reproduced. Men and women, the latter doubtless the most numerous, crowded its place of meeting, observed its holy days, and respected its antique traditions. Many, it would seem, were admitted to some partial communion with the Jewish worshippers: though we do not hear of their submitting to the initiatory rites, or to the peculiar abstinences of national Judaism. The foreigner was still reserved in imparting to these converts the secrets of his faith; and the best informed of the Romans continued, to a late period, possessed with the notion that he either had no God at all, or adored him under a vile and bestial symbol, or possibly did not really know what he believed or wherefore.<sup>1</sup>

Judaism becomes fashionable among the citizens,

This dallying with Judaism was a fashionable weakness: it furnished interest or excitement to the dissipated idlers to whom Ovid addressed his meretricious poetry.<sup>2</sup> To such persons it was probably first recommended through the medium of the slaves from Palestine who swarmed in patrician households. The emperor's palace itself seems to have been a nursery of Jewish usages and opinions. The Columbaria of Claudius, recently discovered, reveal a number of Hebrew names among the imperial freedmen; and, what is still more remarkable, many are the same names, albeit Greek and not Hebrew, which occur in the salutations of St. Paul to his fellow-countrymen in the capital.<sup>3</sup> Assuredly there were in *Cæsar's household*

and is introduced among the freedmen of the palace.

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Juvenal, xiv. 97: "Nil præter nubes et cœli numen adorant." Lucan, *Phars.* ii. 592.: "Et dedita sacris Incerti Judæa Dei." Seneca, quoted by S. Augustin, *de Civ. Dei*, vi. 11.: "Major pars populi facit quod cur faciat ignorat." For the symbol, the ass's head, see Tac. *Hist.* v. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ovid, *Art. Amand.* i. 416.; *Rem. Amor.* 220.; Tibull. i. 3. 18.

<sup>3</sup> I refer to Mr. Lightfoot's account of the inscriptions in certain Columbaria recently discovered at Rome, *Journal of Class. Philol.* No. X. p. 57. from Henzen's supplement to Orelli's Collection. These were receptacles for the ashes of slaves and freedmen of the imperial family. Some of the names, as Hermas and Nereis, are connected with the Claudian gens; others, as Tryphema and Tryphera, with the Valerian, that of Messalina; others, as Crescens, Philo

both slaves and freedmen of every race and nation subject to Rome: but that the connexion between it and Judea should be more than usually close, might be expected from the favour in which the Jews were held by the first emperors, and from the intimacy of the imperial family with so many Jewish princes detained within the precincts of the palace. Judea, under the sway of the procurators, was governed directly from the emperor's own chamber; in one instance a freedman of the emperor administered its affairs, as his master's private property.<sup>1</sup> When we read in the Jewish historian that Poppea, the murderess and adulteress, was a *devout woman*, we must suppose that she was regarded as a patroness by the Jewish clients of Nero's household; in moments of threatened persecution she may have befriended them, nor is it improbable that she admired their usages, humoured their prejudices, and partook of the fashionable inclination to join in their ceremonies.<sup>2</sup>

The favour in which the Jews were held by the emperor was indeed precarious. Beyond the walls of the palace, and of other noble mansions, they were, as we have said, generally disliked; the apprehension which their unquiet attitude at home continued more and more to inspire, penetrated to the centre of the Roman power, and even at Rome every outbreak of sullen fierceness among them was regarded as a symptom of national disaffection. They were accused not of turbulence only, but of corrupting the minds of women; and when, under Tiberius, an effort, as we have seen, was made by the government to check the growing relaxation of female man-

Turbulence of the Jews at Rome. The government evinces jealousy of them.

tus, Hymeneus, are mentioned as Caesar's freedmen; others again, viz. Philologus and Ampliatus (Amplias), occur independently. Among them are some names apparently Jewish, as Barichah, Zabda, Achiba, Giddo, Sabbatis, all Valerii. One at least, Sentia Renata, seems to bespeak a Christian baptism. *Comp. Romana*, c. xvi.

<sup>1</sup> Felix, the favourite of Claudius and Nero, was procurator of Judea, and married to Drusilla, the daughter of Agrippa. *Tac. Hist.* v. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 7. 11. The dancer Apaturius, Poppea's favourite, was a Jew.

ners, the Jews were marked out for proscription together with the Egyptians. The priests of Isis had been convicted of flagrant immorality, and there was a presumed connexion, of origin if not of character, between her rites and those of the Jewish divinity.<sup>1</sup> Besides the disaffection and the licentiousness imputed to them, they disturbed the peace of the city; for the Jews and Egyptians renewed in Rome the perpetual quarrel of their nations in Alexandria, till they provoked the police of the streets to crush them, both together. The rites of both people were interdicted, and four thousand of the free descendants of Jewish slaves and captives were transported at once to Sardinia, while all the Jews at Rome of free origin were required to quit the shores of Italy, or abjure their *profane superstition*.<sup>2</sup> It would seem, however, that the latter part, at least, of this severe edict was not strictly executed. The Jews bowed to the storm, conformed perhaps for a time, but soon returned to their old quarters and renewed their old practices. Those who were attached to the magnates of the city found, no doubt, powerful protectors. They celebrated the birthday of their deceased king, and adored him as a god with pomp and fervour, to avert perhaps the jealousy of the government, to which the worship of Jehovah seemed a bond of more dangerous sympathy.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The ancient emigration of the Jews from Egypt was known, though under strange disfigurements, to the Romans (Tac. *Hist.* v. 8.); the influence of the Jewish race in Alexandria was also notorious; and the Jews in Rome spoke probably the same dialect of Greek as their brethren in Egypt. We may presume, moreover, that they had imbibed from the Alexandrians, or imparted to them, many religious as well as social usages. The linen robes and fillets common to the priesthoods both of Jerusalem and Alexandria seemed to connect them with one another, and were a conspicuous point of difference between them and the priesthoods of Greece and Rome. Thus Lucan, with a distinctive epithet, "*Linigerum placidis compellat Achorea dietis*," x. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* ii. 85.; Suet. *Tib.* 36.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 3. 5. See above, chapter xliv.

<sup>3</sup> This is the interpretation which Salvador, I think justly, puts upon the lines of Persius, *Sat.* v. 180.:—

"At cum

Herodis venere dies, unctaque fenestra



Thus at Rome, as well as in their own country, the Jewish people were divided into two classes or factions, of which the one retained the zeal and cherished the aspirations of its national heroes, the other, more courtly and discreet, yielded to the moral influence of the conquerors, and was content to exchange the subjection of its native land for its own personal advantage. While the slaves of the Palatine acquiesced with a complacent smile in their gilded servitude, the artificers and chapmen of the Transtiberine, and the pedlars of the Egerian valley, were agitated year by year with rumours of new Messiahs appearing in the streets of Jerusalem or on the slopes of the wilderness, and drawing after them excited multitudes, till their career was rudely intercepted by the Roman sword. The direct establishment of the Roman power in Palestine by Claudius, following so soon upon the brutal attack on the Jewish faith by Caius, seems to have driven this frantic populace of Judea to a succession of desperate outbreaks. Among the Jewish sojourners in foreign cities, connected as they were by constant intercourse with their native land, the same restless feeling was speedily manifested. It is thus that we can best explain the hasty notice of Suetonius, when he states that Claudius once more expelled the Jews from Rome, on account of their repeated riots at the instigation of a certain Chrestus.<sup>1</sup> This name, as is well known, was a form of the title Christus, the anointed Messiah, familiar to the Romans and derived from the Hellenistic Jews themselves, and was the watchword, no doubt, of the disturbers of peace in the city, who looked, at every fresh arrival of exciting news from home, for a divine manifesta-

The Jews at Rome as in their own country, divided into two factions.

Dispositæ pinguem nebulam vomuere lucernæ . . .  
Labra moves tacitus, recutitque Sabbata palles."

Herod Agrippa was dead some years before these lines were written: the homage or worship was paid to his memory.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 25.: "Judæos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit." Tertullian (*Apol.* 3.) and Lactantius (*Inst.* i. 4. 7., iv. 7. 5.) explain this word as a metonym for Christ, signifying just or good.

tion in favour of the kingdom of Jehovah.<sup>1</sup> The scarcity which befell the city as well as the provinces at this period might furnish a further motive for an act of prudential severity. It was manifestly expedient to remove from the midst of the needy populace of the forum the most fierce and turbulent of their fellow-subjects. With the return of better times the Jews returned also; but meanwhile the proscription would again have been partial only; the Herodians, under the shelter of noble houses, would shrink from the general persecution, and repudiate, no doubt, with earnest protestations, the crimes and follies of the zealots.

Not that the luxurious dependants of the Roman nobles were themselves unmoved amidst the universal ferment of Jewish opinion. They were vain of their own position, and of the influence they had attained over their masters; they were proud of the number of fellow-slaves or freedmen, for the most part refined and intelligent Greeks, who sate at their feet to hear their ancient lore, and drank in with warmed imaginations the wonders of the Law, and the splendid promises of the Prophets. God, they believed, still spake by their mouths; exiles and outcasts as they were, they were still the depositaries of His oracles; in the power of their own eloquence they felt the yet unexhausted power of a living faith in Jehovah. They were convinced that there was still a future before them, a future of glory and spiritual empire; though they sought in vain to penetrate the design of Providence, and scan the process through which it was to be developed. They too had heard of a Christ here and a Christ there; but they had no hope of a temporal deliverance, and the destruction of

Spiritual pride  
of the Jewish  
freedmen at  
Rome.

<sup>1</sup> We know the time and place where the believers in Jesus were first called Christians (*Acts*, xi. 26. *χρηματισά*, "received the title, already popularly known, of Christians"); but this does not show that the followers of false Christs had not received the name before, or that the name was not commonly given to both by the heathens without discrimination. For the false Christs, see the commentators on *S. Matth.* xxiv. 24. *ψευδοχριστο*, and *Joseph. Antiq.* xviii. 1. 1. on Judas the Gaulonite, and *xx.* 5. 1. on Theudas. Comp. for the Jewish view of the subject, Salvador, *Dom. Rom. en Judée*, i. 435.

each pretended Messiah was a relief to them rather than a disappointment. It was to minds thus prepared that the message of Jesus, the true Christ, the spiritual king of the Jews, was announced. Among the many deliverers who had risen and fallen, one alone, it was declared, had risen again : crucified, dead and buried, He had been raised from the grave by the hand of the Almighty.

On the first succeeding Pentecost after this awful fact was reported to have occurred, the doctrines and pretensions of the disciples of this risen Jesus had been propounded to a concourse of Jews and proselytes, assembled at Jerusalem from all quarters of the world. Sojourners at Rome had returned there full of the solemn tidings, and from that time the peculiar character of the new revelation, as the announcement of a spiritual, not a temporal deliverance, had been circulated from mouth to mouth among the Jews of the capital. By some among them such a view, as we have seen, might be entertained with favour, though by others it would be abhorred as treason to the national cause. At first, however, there would be no question, in any quarter, of the abandonment of ancient rites and usages. If a few more ardent or more tender spirits were at once captivated by the first shadowing forth of true Christian liberty, they would not dream as yet of seceding from the rest on matters of religious discipline. They would join with their brethren in urging upon their foreign proselytes that entire submission to the Hebrew law which was demanded, not often successfully, by the strictest adherents of the old belief. Again, year by year, visitors from this Jewish society would arrive at Jerusalem, and from them the Christian Church, now beginning to take a specific form in the place of its origin, would learn that a small knot of inquirers in the distant capital had accepted their announcement of the Messiahship of Jesus, and were ripe for further instruction in the mysteries of his faith. At last, in the fulness of time, the greatest of their teachers, Paul, the eloquent and the learned, addressed this little flock in a letter of

Reception of  
Christianity  
among this  
class of Jews  
and their prose-  
lytes.

spiritual admonition, which laid, in fact, the real foundation of Christianity in Rome. Now, supposing the people to whom this missive was directed to be, as I have here represented them, Jews and Greeks, retainers of aristocratic households, clients, for instance, of the great Narcissus and even of the emperor himself, to none could the warning with which it commences, of the fearful depths of vice to which heathenism had fallen, have been more peculiarly appropriate. On none could the general scope of its argument, that the Gospel was given to the Jews first, the teachers, and next to the Greeks, the proselytes, of the Roman synagogue, tell with greater effect. That circumcision was not essential, that the works of the law were ineffectual, that faith and grace are the foundations of a true Christian calling,—such would be the topics uppermost in the mind of a preacher to thoughtful and perplexed believers, anxious to conform to the old ways in all things, but unable to enforce conformity upon their foreign adherents. And lastly, the exhortation to remain subject to the higher powers would speak with emphasis to that class among the Jews who had hitherto kept aloof from the intrigues of their impatient countrymen, and proclaimed themselves obedient in everything, first to their own patrons and masters, and next to the political authorities under which they lived.<sup>1</sup> The Epistle to the Romans is, I conceive, especially addressed to the godly few of that patrician following, half Jew, half Grecian, who were feeling their way still timidly and doubtfully to belief in Jesus of Nazareth, the son of God, the true Messiah, the founder of the spiritual kingdom of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

Special applicability to them of St. Paul's teaching in the Epistle to the Romans.

<sup>1</sup> *Romans*, i. 8. foll., i. 16., iii. 25. foll., xiii. 1. foll. "They that are of the household of Narcissus" (xvi. 11.) are mentioned along with the others of whom so many appear to have been "of Caesar's household." It is reasonable to infer that this Narcissus is the favourite of Claudius.

<sup>2</sup> On this supposition the remarkable compliment, if I may so call it, to this congregation, that *their faith was spoken of throughout the world* (*Rom.* i. 8.), receives an apt explanation. The disposition of these conspicuous freedmen towards Christianity would be reported to the family of the procurator in Judea,

This epistle, written in the East in the year 811 (A. D. 58), was followed, after an interval, perhaps, of three years, by the arrival of the apostle himself at Rome. He came in bonds. He had been seized and nearly killed by his countrymen at Jerusalem, for preaching the true Messiah. He had been accused by them to the Romans as a mover of sedition. But he had proclaimed himself a Roman citizen, had appealed to Cæsar, and, though brought as a prisoner to the imperial tribunal, he came under the protection of the government.<sup>1</sup> At Rome, he avowed, no doubt, his real character as a teacher of a harmless doctrine, already known, and not unfavourably, in the highest quarters; and though long detained untried, through the indolence, probably, of the emperor, he suffered no other inconvenience. He was guarded by the prætorians within the precincts of the palace, lodged in a hired cabin attached, it may be supposed, to its outer courts, such as those commonly occupied by the retainers of a noble patron; free access to him was allowed to his compatriots and co-religionists, and for two years he was employed in preaching and extending the faith even among the members of Cæsar's household.<sup>2</sup> Of the perfect security with which the Gospel of the

Arrival of St.  
Paul in Rome.

A. D. 61.  
A. U. 814.

and thence would doubtless be published abroad as an important fact among the Jews and Christians everywhere.

<sup>1</sup> The exact dates of these events are not important to this history, and I do not mean to express a decided opinion about them. I have followed the opinions which seemed to me on the whole the best supported.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase in *Phil.* i. 18., *ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ*, as is well known, has been diversely interpreted, of the emperor's palace, and of the camp of the prætorians. I incline to the former interpretation. St. Paul, we must remember, speaks as a foreigner. In the provinces the emperor was known, not as Princeps, but as Imperator. In Judea, governed more immediately by him through the imperial procurators, he would be more exclusively regarded as a military chief. The soldier, to whom the apostle was attached with a chain, would speak of him as his general. When Paul asked the centurion in charge of him, "Where shall I be confined in Rome?" the answer would be, "In the prætorium," or the quarters of the general. When led, as perhaps he was, before the emperor's tribunal, if he asked the attending guards, "Where am I?" again they would reply, "In the prætorium." The emperor was protected in his

true Christ was professed at this time at Rome there can be no question. To account for it some have supposed an intimacy between Paul and the prefect Burrhus, or the minister Seneca, and the writings of the apostle and the philosopher present certainly some striking points of apparent sympathy. At a later period it was gravely asserted among the new sect, that Tiberius, on the official statements of Pontius Pilate, had acknowledged the divinity of the culprit whom the procurator had crucified, and had demanded divine honours from the senate for the Founder of Christianity. These the senate, it was said, declined to sanction: the emperor, however, insisted that the Christians should be allowed at least a full toleration.<sup>1</sup> The story itself, as told by Tertullian, is probably groundless throughout; but it shows at least, and such is the purpose for which Tertullian cites it, that the early indulgence of the government to Christianity was an admitted fact which challenged explanation. Whatever may be the value of these traditions, the opposition in which the true

palace by a body-guard, lodged in its courts and standing sentry at its gates: and accordingly, they received the name of "prætoriana." After the establishment of a camp for his body-guard outside the city, a cohort was still kept always in attendance on the emperor's person, and in his principal residence, and this accordingly in military language continued, I conceive, to bear the title familiar to the soldiers. The palace, like other patrician mansions, was surrounded by numerous cabins, tenanted by the retainers of the great man himself, and in one of these, as "a hired house," the apostle was permitted to dwell, from the favour, perhaps in which his nation was held, instead of being cast into the vaults beneath the palace floors.

<sup>1</sup> Tertull. *Apol.* 5: "Tiberius . . . annunciatum sibi ex Syria Palestina quod illic veritatem illius divinitatis revelaverat, detulit ad Senatum cum prærogativa suffragii sui. Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respuit. Cæsar in sententia mansit, comminatus periculum accusatoribus Christianorum." This strange story has been generally rejected as incredible by the best critics and historians. It may be remarked, however, that the official minute of our Lord's trial and sentence was no doubt transmitted by the procurator to the emperor, and was deposited in the archives at Rome. It was hence perhaps that Tacitus was able to speak so pointedly of the execution of Christ by Pontius Pilate: "Auctor nominis ejus Christus, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat."—*Ann.* xv. 44.

believers stood to the assertors of false and temporal Messiahs would be alone a sufficient motive for the favour they manifestly received.

Nevertheless, there is no ground for supposing that, under the shelter of this indulgence, the young disciples shunned the genuine practice of their profession, or walked unworthily of their spiritual hopes. The faint traces left us by history may suggest a pleasing picture to the imagination of the life and conversation of the first Christians at Rome, that little band of earnest and spiritual converts, first exploring by the light of conscience the rudiments of the new doctrine, then receiving clearer instruction from the letters, and lastly from the mouth of the inspired apostle, strengthened by his presence, inflamed by his zeal, reasoning ardently with the more timid of their brethren, gradually overcoming the scruples of some, bearing with the prejudices of others, suffering patiently the scorn of the proud and worldly with whom they mingled, and presenting to their curious visitors from surrounding Paganism the first and purest example of zeal beautified by charity. Some minds there were at Rome which shrank with a rebound from the grosser forms of corruption thrust everywhere upon them; some which were softened to feelings of humanity by the general ease and tranquillity of the times; some, again, which warmed with spiritual emotions under the fervent teaching of virtuous philosophers: even in that sink of vice, under the flaunting banners of lust and cruelty, there was a preparation at work for the reception of Gospel truth, and the plain preaching of St. Paul was more attractive perhaps to many than the strange rites and mysteries of the Jewish synagogue. But the apostle preached to his disciples *in bonds*, and of the multitudes who came to hear him, *no man forbidding him*, the true children of Rome were themselves still under constraint of pride and prejudice, and dependent on the idols of society around them, from which few, perhaps, could wholly escape. Jews and Greeks might submit to the yoke of a crucified Redeemer, but con-

Story of Pomponia Gracina  
In illustration  
of the conduct  
of the Roman  
converts.

version among the native Italians was as yet rare and imperfect.<sup>1</sup> To renounce a world with which it might seem impossible to mingle without defilement, rather than seek by active labours to purify it, would be the refuge of the grave and gloomy spirits which really broke through the restraints of law and custom to join themselves to a divine Saviour. The story of Pomponia Græcina, supposed by many to have been one of these Roman believers, may be taken at least in illustration of the form which belief might be expected to assume among a reserved and sensitive people, disdaining the spirit of proselytism, and ashamed to the last of rejecting their domestic and national ideas. This noble matron, the wife of Aulus Plantius, the conqueror of Britain, was, it seems, denounced to the emperor *as guilty of a foreign superstition*; a charge implying not merely participation in the rites of a licensed religion, but abandonment of the national worship, such as Christianity perhaps alone then demanded of its votaries.<sup>2</sup> Nero, from respect for a brave and loyal officer, or

<sup>1</sup> A great proportion of the converts greeted by St. Paul in the last chapter to the Romans bear Greek names. They may have been Jews or other foreigners, but assuredly not Romans by birth. The same was probably the case of those with Latin names also. Mr. Williams's attempt to identify the Pudens and Claudia of Martial (iv. 13., xi. 56.) with the converts mentioned by St. Paul (2 *Tm.* iv. 21.) is interesting; but we must not forget—1. that both these names are very common at the period: 2. that the name of Pudens in the Chichester inscription is only conjectural: 3. that the character Martial gives of Pudens is painfully inconsistent with the Christian profession. The Claudia of Martial was, he says, of British extraction. In our island, as in Gaul, many chiefs were enrolled no doubt in the imperial gens, and it is idle to assign this lady to any one British family in particular. At all events, the notion of Camden and Fuller, that she was a daughter of Caractacus domiciled in Rome, seems as plausible as that which derives her from Tib. Claudius Cogidubnus, the king of the Regni in Sussex. See, however, Williams's *Essay on Pudens*, &c., or an abstract of his arguments in Alford's *Greek Test.* iii. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Such, no doubt, should in strictness have been the demand of Judaism also: but there is ample evidence of the compromise which the Jews generally allowed to their half-attached followers and admirers. Herod, for instance, made no doubt conditions with them, like Naaman the Syrian, who stipulated that he should be allowed to bow, when he stood with his master in the temple of Rimmon. 2 *Kings*, v. 18



possibly from a feeling of indulgence, as above explained, towards the new sect, refused to entertain the accusation himself, and referred it to the domestic tribunal of the husband and his kinsmen. Pomponia was examined by lenient judges, and by their tenderness, their ignorance, or their indifference, was suffered to escape unpunished. But it was remarked with awe by the frivolous society around her, that she withdrew from all conversation with them, shrank into the secret companionship of her own pensive meditations, and passed the rest of her life, which was prolonged many years, in reserve and retirement. Such, it would seem, were the effects, most foreign to the spirit of the age, which might be expected from conversion to Christianity in a noble matron of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

St. Paul was kept under restraint for at least two years, but soon after that period was set at liberty; a further testimony, it would appear, to the acknowledged offensiveness of his sect.<sup>2</sup> Yet in little more than another year we read with surprise of the sudden persecution directed against it by Nero, and we hear that he was induced to denounce the Christians as the authors of the conflagration, to propitiate the popular feeling; for none others were so detested for their *strange and mischievous superstition*, or so generally held *guilty of the most abominable crimes*, of the crime, indeed, of *hatred towards the whole human race*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 32, (A. U. 810): "Superstitutionis externæ rea:" an expression which has been very generally interpreted of conversion to Christianity. See Lardner, *Testimonies*, i. 344. The Romans, indeed, ascribed Pomponia's long melancholy to grief for the murder of Julia by Messalina, fourteen years earlier. Tac. l. c.; Dion lx. 18. It seems not unreasonable to suppose that sorrow turned her mind to spiritual consolations.

<sup>2</sup> That the apostle was detained at Rome for two years appears from the conclusion of the *Acts*. His release is presumed on the authority of tradition embodied in the early church histories, and supported inferentially by the Epistles. Supposing him to have reached Rome early in 814 (A. D. 61), he may have quitted it again in 816, the year before the persecution.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44.: "Per flagitia invisos . . . odio generis humani . . . fontes et novissima supplicia meritos." Suet. *Ner.* 16.: "Genus hominum superstitionis novæ et maleficæ."

The horror of the sacrifice will be enhanced if we consider the position and character of its victims, such as I have represented them. They were not a base and turbulent rabble like the mass of the Jewish residents, who had been more than once swept away by general edicts of exile or deportation; but a mixed company of Greeks and Romans, as well as Jews, some well-born, all perhaps instructed and accomplished, capable of appreciating the refined intelligence of the Apostle, all trained by habit, as well as by principle, to obey the laws, and respect the usages of those around them. Not only were men and women of gentle nature put to the most cruel of deaths,—not only was mockery added to their pangs,—but the process against them seems to have been more summary and informal than we read of in the persecutions of later times.<sup>1</sup>

Critical readers have, I believe, often felt a difficulty in accepting the plain assertions of Tacitus and Suetonius on this subject. They have remarked that there is nothing in the known habits and teaching of early Christianity to account for such infatuated hatred. If here and there a patrician convert vexed his kinsmen by withholding the domestic offering, such cases were at least extremely rare, nor would they be noticed by the vulgar, whose clamours alone are recorded. The usages of the disciples were indeterminate in their outward form; their tenets were mostly subjective; there was little in either that could openly clash with popular prejudices. The first Christians at Rome did not separate themselves from the heathens, nor renounce their ordinary callings; they

Difficulty of accounting for this supposed persecution of the Christians.

<sup>1</sup> This may be inferred, I think, from the words of Tacitus, compared with later accounts of the punctilious observance of form in the proceedings against the Christians. It was only towards the end of the last and worst of the persecutions, that of Diocletian, according to their own confession, that punishment was summarily inflicted. See Ruinart, *præf. in Act. Martyr.* p. xxix., from Eusebius. Up to that time every judicial sentence had been formally registered, and Christian inquirers, when they found these fewer than they had expected, declared that the registers had been tampered with. Comp. Prudentius, *Peristeph.* i. 75: "Chartulas blasphemus olim nam satelles abstulit."

intermarried with unbelievers, nor even in their unions with one another did they reject the ordinary forms of law.<sup>1</sup> It would seem that they burnt their dead after the Roman fashion, gathered their ashes into the sepulchres of their patrons, and inscribed over them the customary dedication to the *Divine Spirits*.<sup>2</sup> They wore no distinctive garb like the professors of philosophy; they continued to dwell in the midst of their unconverted countrymen, frequented their synagogues and respected their sabbaths, at the same time that they paid special honour to the day which followed the sabbath, as the day of their Lord's resurrection. Before St. Paul came among them they can hardly have had a ministry, nor can we speak with certainty of any definite provision being made even by him at Rome for this distinctive badge of an independent religion. Christianity with them was eminently a doctrine rather than a ceremonial. They invested, indeed, with mysterious significance their rites of Initiation and Communion; and in the typical language in which the meaning of these sacraments was shrouded the heathens might find a motive for jealousy.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, such mysteries were common to the pagan cults also, and the misconception eventually put on them in the case of the Christians was the consequence, perhaps, rather than the cause, of the odium in which the sect came itself to be held.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mixed marriages were denounced by Tertullian and Cyprian; but not, as far as we know, earlier. The ceremonial of Christian marriage, the espousals, the ring, and other particulars, are derived from heathen usage, nor is there any trace of a special church service in primitive times. The passage from Tertullian, *ad Uxor.* ii. 8, 9., proves nothing to the contrary. Christians made it a matter of conscience to obtain the consent and blessing of the bishop.

<sup>2</sup> Such is the interpretation which, it seems, must be given to the letters D. M. (dis manibus), which occur so frequently on the tombs of the early Christians at Rome. See Muratori in the *Roman Acad. Archeol.* xiii. 39. foll. (Lightfoot, l. c.)

<sup>3</sup> As regards the Eucharist at least, the language of the Christian liturgies, which the further we inquire seem to remount higher in primitive antiquity, is more decided and uniform than that of the fathers.

<sup>4</sup> We do not know when the notorious calumnies against the Christian love-feasts were first propounded; but they are first referred to by the apologists in

The precipitate harshness, indeed, with which men and women of the world have judged the spirit of devotion in modern times, the sourness, the self-righteousness, the hypocrisy they have ascribed to it, may indicate to us the feeling with which such of the Romans as came personally in contact with this saintly community might regard its character and habits. They would express, no doubt more openly than our milder manners allow, their wonder, their vexation, and their scorn. But the atrocious language of Tacitus and Suetonius far transcends this limit, and we are lost in wonder at the charge of firing the city, with the general imputation of hating all mankind, against a sect so unobtrusive as well as so innocent. Nor can we fail to remark how short a time is allowed by our accounts for the growth of this hostile feeling. Up to the arrival of St. Paul the Christians form evidently an obscure and unorganized society; within three years from that date the whole city is filled with inveterate detestation of them. This is the more strange when we observe how little attention, except in this instance, Christianity attracted at this period in Rome. It has not been mentioned by Lucan, or the elder Pliny, though both these writers have noticed the manners of the Jews; nor by Seneca, though Seneca is full of the tenets of the philosophers; nor by Persius, though Persius is a shrewd observer of the salient features of society generally. Such is the silence of the contemporaries of St. Paul and Nero. Had the Christians occupied, even in the next generation, a large space in Roman eyes, could the painters of manners such as Juvenal and Martial, who have dashed in, with such glaring colours, Jews, Greeks, and Egyptians, have failed to fill their canvas with portraits and caricatures of them? <sup>1</sup> Half a century had passed from the Neronian per-

Christianity  
little noticed in  
Rome before,  
and for some  
time after, Nero.

the second or perhaps the third century. See Minucius Felix, *Octav.* 9.; Tertull. *Apol.* 3.; Athenagoras, 4.

<sup>1</sup> Juvenal alludes (vil. 257.) to the cause of Nero's persecution, and to the mode of punishment. Comp. also i. 155. Martial notices the fortitude of those who refused to sacrifice with the stake and pitched shirt before them.

secution before we meet with the first charges now extant against them.

Such being the grounds for questioning the accuracy of our accounts of this matter, it has been suggested that it was against the Jews, not the Christians, the devotees of false Christs, not the worshippers of Jesus, the wolves of the Transtiberine, not the lambs of the Palatine, that Nero's edict was really directed. We have seen how obnoxious the Jews generally were to the bigotry of the Roman populace: they were reproached with their ferocity, isolation, and spiritual pride; the turbulence of their fanatical Christ seekers had already provoked both prince and people. The menacing attitude they held in their own country was a cause at this moment of increased exasperation. It was easy to imagine that the compatriots of the men who were levying war against Rome in Palestine had kindled a conflagration in the capital itself. Tiberius had gratified the popular clamour by deporting thousands of these wretches to Sardinia. Claudius had expelled them in a body from Rome. The people now stimulated Nero to make shorter and bloodier work with them; and the fanatics of the city were subjected to the same barbarous vengeance which had alighted repeatedly on their brethren in the mountains of Galilee and the wilderness of Judea. It is conjectured that our authorities, writing fifty years later, confused the Jews with the Christians. That Suetonius, in a previous statement, had fallen into such an error, is generally admitted. He may have done the same in this place. Tacitus, though a graver authority, is liable to the charge of colouring the events he describes with the hues of his own period. When he wrote the false Christs were extinguished and forgotten, but the true Christ had become notorious throughout the empire. The true believers, meek and inoffensive as they were, had succeeded, by an unjust fate, to all the odium which had

Question as to  
the persons  
designated as  
"Christians."

(x. 25.). This may refer to the later persecution of Trajan. There can be little doubt that this barbarous torture was invented before Nero (see Senec. *Epist.* 14), and continued to be practiced after him.

popularly attached to the fanatics. On the Christians, regarded as a remnant or revival of Judaism, Tacitus, it may be supposed, bestowed all the bitterness which a terrible war had engendered in Roman breasts against everything Jewish.<sup>1</sup> They were lying at the moment under sentence of proscription by his master, Trajan: they were deserting the temples, withholding sacrifice from the imperial altars, meeting in secret and illicit conclaves in the provinces, and Pliny, the friend of Tacitus, was inquiring how he should proceed towards them.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the historian may think of the charges of immorality calumniously preferred against them, their anticipations of a world-wide triumph, of the fall of the empire, and the dissolution of the age in fire, might be held as damning evidence against them, and entitle them in his view to a return of that scorn and hatred which they were deemed themselves to cherish against the whole frame of society.<sup>3</sup>

Such is the view recommended to us by the great name of Gibbon, which it is due perhaps to his character as an historian to lay before the reader. Though liable to the suspicion of interested motives, he is too Conjecture of  
Gibbon. shrewd to advance even an interested argument without reasonable grounds. But the existence of Christians in the time of Nero is no longer held to depend in any degree on the testimony of Tacitus, nor does the conjecture merit in

<sup>1</sup> It should be noticed, to show how readily Tacitus might confound the Jews and the Christians, that he characterizes both in precisely the same remarkable terms. Comp. of the Christians, *Ann.* xv. 44.: "Odio generis humani;" and of the Jews, *Hist.* v. 5.: "Adversus omnes alios hostile odium."

<sup>2</sup> Plin. *Epist.* x. 96. (97.): a letter supposed to have been written in the year 104, probably a few years earlier than the later books of the *Annals*.

<sup>3</sup> These topics had not been untouched by St. Paul; but it will be readily conceived that it was after the fall of Jerusalem and the publication of the Apocalypse that they became most prominent, and began to attract the notice of the heathens. Dr. Milman, feeling the difficulty which attaches to our accounts of the Neronian persecution, has suggested that the popular hatred towards the Christians, and belief in their guilt, were caused by their vaunts of an impending conflagration of the world. *Hist. of Christianity*, ii. 37.

itself the disdain, real or affected, with which our polemics have generally treated it.<sup>1</sup>

For myself, perplexed by the received account, yet scrupling to admit such entire misapprehension on the part of our authorities, I crave a fair consideration for another suggestion:—that the suspicions of the Roman mob were directed against the turbulent Jews, notorious for their appeals to the name of Christ, as an expected prince or leader:—that these fanatics, arrested and questioned, not so much of the burning as of their political creed, sought to implicate the true disciples, known to them and hated by them, however obscure and inoffensive in Roman eyes, in the same charge:—that the true Christians, thus associated in the charge of Christ-worship, avowed the fact in their own sense, a sense which their judges did not care to discriminate:—that the believers became thus more or less sufferers, though doubly innocent both of the fire and of political disaffection:—finally, that our historians, misled by this false information, finding even in the public records that the name of Christ was the common shibboleth of the victims, too readily imagined that the persecution was directed against the *Christians* only. Frightful as this attack on the brethren was, it thus fell only obliquely upon them; it may be hoped that it was as transient as it was sudden. If we may draw any conclusions from the monuments lately discovered of the Claudian freedmen, it would seem that many of the disciples, whom St. Paul had greeted by name, died quietly in their beds. Though Christian writers have concurred in citing the Neronian as the first of their persecutions, it is remarkable that the Church has specified none of its victims among

Another view suggested.

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, *Decl. and Fall*, ch. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> The animosity of the Jews of the old faith to the Christian reformers is strongly marked in the *Acts* of the Apostles, and recurs again in almost the earliest documents of the first apostolic age. See particularly *Martyr. Polycarp.* c. 18.; *Justin Martyr, Dialog. and Apol.*; *Tertullian, adv. Judæos.* Tacitus himself points to the betrayal of one set of victims by another: “*primo correpti qui faterentur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens.*”

her noble army of Martyrs.<sup>1</sup> St. Paul himself is not supposed to have fallen on this occasion. Absent at the time from Rome, he returned there soon after; but in the epistle he wrote from thence within two or three years of this date, no allusion occurs to the recent sufferings of his disciples. The story that he was beheaded at Rome in the last year of Nero has been current from early times; but this tradition, however probable in itself, is attended with circumstances which show how little it was connected, in the minds of the first Christians, with the theory of a general proscription of their faith.<sup>2</sup>

The notion that Nero's measures extended to the provinces, or issued in a standing decree against Christianity, though attested by some of the ancients and much cherished by many moderns, rests on slender and equivocal testimony.<sup>3</sup> It was one thing to indulge the momentary rage of the populace, another to establish the principle of religious persecution. There seems no

General religious toleration under Nero.

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim, *De Rebus Christ. ante Constant.* sæc. i. § 34.

<sup>2</sup> For the presumed date of St. Paul's martyrdom I refer to the statement of Jerome: "xiv. Neronis anno," *Catal. c. 5*. Cyril of Jerusalem reported that his death was caused by a quarrel with Simon Magus, Chrysostom that he was punished for having converted Nero's mistress (*Cave's Life of St. Paul*). That St. Paul suffered at Rome has been a constant tradition from early times (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 25.; Origen, in *Gen.* iii.); but the argument from Clemens Romanus (i. 5., possibly the original authority for it) seems to me mere trifling. A Reginus professor of divinity ought not to sanction the translation of μαρτυρίας ἐν τῶν ἡγουμένων, martyrdom subiens sub præfectis Urbis; and a learned chronologer's illustration of the phrase by the δὲ αἰροσπότερος (Helius and Nero) of Dion, is an ingenious extravagance. Perhaps a cautious inquirer will be satisfied with the language of the apostle himself (2 *Tim.* iv. 6-16.), which indicates the expectation of speedy martyrdom, and may itself have suggested the ecclesiastical tradition.

<sup>3</sup> That the persecution extended to the provinces is first asserted by Orosius (vii. 71.). This notion is considered to be amply refuted by Dodwell (*Diss. Cypri.* xi.). See Gieseler, *Eccl. Hist.* i. 1. 28. The Lusitanian inscription is given up. That Nero issued a standing decree against Christianity, which continued to be the law of the empire, is roundly asserted by Tertullian (*ad Nation.* i. 7.), a writer prone to misinterpret facts to the advantage of his own argument.



reason to doubt that Nero respected the maxims of his country in tolerating generally all religions against which no public scandal could be alleged. The citizens were not restrained by law from practising foreign rites, provided they did not overtly reject those of the nation, and their conduct, even in this particular, was not jealously watched. The proselytes to Judaism, and even to Christianity, might possibly evade the required solemnities; the magistrates were lax, the bystanders were indifferent. As yet we meet with no indication of that uneasy apprehension of spiritual emotions, expressed by the specific inhibition of new and strange religions *by which the minds of men may be moved*, which marked a later period of Roman jurisprudence.<sup>1</sup> Toleration, indeed, on such a basis, constitutes no claim to a prudent liberality on the part of the Roman government. It was rather an unreflecting persistence in habits of thought derived from another state of society. The toleration of the empire was a relic of the proud exclusiveness of primitive ages, which never contemplated the possibility of the sons of Mars and Rhea deigning to bow before the gods of enemies and strangers; which had no fear of innovation, nor appreciated the risks of conversion. The government indulged in indolent security while the foundations of the old ideas were crumbling away. The active growth of Christianity first opened the eyes of rulers and people. The sword had been long suspended over the Christians; sometimes it had descended, and the disciples, always insecure, had been made to suffer; but whenever the jealousy of the state was awakened, no special edict was required to drag them before the altar of Jupiter, and invite them to sprinkle it with incense, and conceive a vow to the genius of the emperor.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Paul. *Sentent.* v. 21. 2. "Novæ et usu incognitæ, quibus mentes hominum moveantur."

<sup>2</sup> The fact that Nero's was the first persecution, the barbarities attending it, possibly also the notoriety given to it by the narrative of Tacitus, impressed later generations of Christians with a peculiar horror of this tyrant. But the notion that he was the Antichrist of the Apocalypse, and that he should return

The Roman Empire, at this epoch, was like one of the statues so common at the time, in which a new head had been fitted to the original trunk; and as the sculptor, passing his finger-nail along the marble, assured himself that the juncture was not sensible to the touch, so the citizens might believe, under the widespread liberty of thought they actually enjoyed; that the fatal severance between freedom and despotism was not to be detected by the nicest organs.<sup>1</sup> But beneath the more refined and sensitive classes of the capital, those which claimed the privilege of thought and knew how to use it, lay next the multitude of triflers and idlers, the rich voluptuaries, the pampered officials, the upstart freedmen of the emperor and his courtiers, who, environed as they were with perils, endured the tyranny of the Cæsars for the sake of their own ease and luxury, and were content to enjoy the present hour without regard to the past or the future. Minds enervated by indulgence, shattered by vice, estranged from all high and pure aspirations by the pleasures of sense, were unable to cope with despotism: these men could only crouch like dogs under the uplifted arm of their master; they had not energy even to fly from it. Whatever indignation they might feel towards the tyrant, they could only vent it in spiteful demonstrations against his creatures, and he could at any time avert their murmurs from himself by throwing to them a victim from his own court or household. Then was revealed on the public stage of history the secret to which the interior of every private house could testify, of the fearful union which may subsist between soft voluptuous manners and cal-

The govern-  
ment of Nero  
supported by  
the voluptuous-  
ness and cruelty  
of the age.

in power from the Euphrates (xiii. 8., xvi. 12., xvii. 8. 16.; comp. Neander, *Pflanzung und Leitung*, p. 480.), cannot be traced to primitive times. The date of the pseudo-Sibylline oracle, *ἐν ἀναστροφῇ ἰσχύων θεός αὐτόν* is very uncertain. St. Augustine (*Civ. Dei*, xx. 19.) speaks of the belief as common, but not universal, in his day: "Nonnulli ipsum resurrecturum, et futurum Anti-Christum suspiciantur." Comp. Lactantius, *de Mort. Persecut.* c. 2., and some verses of Commodianus, possibly of the third century.

<sup>1</sup> Pers. *Sat.* l. 64.: "Ut per lave severos Effundat junctura ungues."

lous ferocity of disposition. Then the men whose own muscles were flaccid with the abuse of the bath, the table, and the couch, were seen to gloat with horrid fascination over the pangs of physical suffering they wantonly inflicted. The cruelty of the women vied with that of the men. To these cynical sensualists, with a depravity of feeling unfortunately not uncommon, the spectacle of virtue tormented would be a positive enjoyment; and there is too much reason to apprehend that by them the despotism of a Nero was supported for the gratification it ministered to their fiendish maliciousness.

The corrupt morality of the age, pervading all ranks and classes, was, above all, the cause of the patient endurance of tyranny which so lamentably distinguished it. With the loss of self-respect engendered by merely selfish indulgences men lose that keen sense of wrong even when inflicted on themselves, which nerves the hand of resistance more vigorously than fear or pain. The distrust which the victim of Tiberius and Nero conceived for all around him, from the consciousness of his own turpitude, paralysed every attempt at combination. The vices common to all great cities flourished with rank luxuriance in the capital of a society thus depraved and soulless. Sensuality in its most degrading forms pervaded all classes, and was fostered by the publicity of ordinary life, by the allurements of art, sometimes by the direct injunctions of a gross superstition, to a degree of shamelessness which has made it the opprobrium of history. Doubtless the iniquities of Rome have been more nakedly exposed than those of modern cities by the unblushing frankness of its moralists and satirists; but their frankness or effrontery was itself a product of the licentiousness of the age: Juvenal would have cast a veil over the wantonness he chastised, if public decorum had seemed in the least to require it. The distinguishing vices of the great were meanness and servility, the pursuit of money by every artifice and compliance: they had little of the sense of honour which forms an exterior bulwark even to feeble moral

Reflections on  
the depraved  
morality of the  
age.

principles among ourselves. The poor, on the other hand, with their dearest wants and pleasures provided for them, were not stimulated to dishonesty by the dire struggle for life, or even by the thirst of advancement, which are at once the bane and the preserving salt of modern society. But they were brutal, bloodthirsty, callous to the infliction of pain, familiar in daily life with cruelties such as we shudder to hear of in modern times under the influence of violent passions, in the momentary excesses of popular outbreaks. Much candour and discrimination are required in comparing the sins of one age with those of another, still more in pronouncing between them, especially where the hideousness of the subject must deter us from dragging them fully into light: but we must not be led to lay upon Pagan Idolatry too large a share of the reproach from which even true religion has not been exempted; for Christianity, divine as it is in its precepts and its sanctions, has proved but weak in contending against the passions of our corrupt nature: the cruelty of our Inquisitions and sectarian persecutions, of our laws against sorcery, our serfdom and our slavery; the petty fraudulence we tolerate in almost every class and calling of the community; the bold front worn by our open sensuality; the deeper degradation of that which is concealed; all these leave us little room for boasting of our modern discipline, and must deter the thoughtful inquirer from too confidently contrasting the morals of the old world and the new.

The fairest, perhaps, and certainly the most pleasing comparison we can make between modern and ancient civilization, between the effect of a divine and a human teaching, lies in the virtues they may seem respectively to have fostered: for we must not forget that even under heathenism there was always a moral teaching at work, and amidst all the incentives to vice, instruction was never wanting in virtue. However feebly the voice of religion or philosophy may have fallen on the ears of the multitude, the circumstances of daily life read constant lessons in love and honesty. Human nature indeed, like run-

Counteracting  
principles of  
virtue.

ning water, has a tendency to purify itself by action; the daily wants of life call forth corresponding duties, and duties daily performed settle into principles, and ripen into graces. Even at Rome in the worst of times, men of affairs, particularly those in middle stations, most removed from the temptations of luxury and poverty, were in the habitual practice of integrity and self-denial; mankind had faith in the general honesty of their equals, in the justice of their patrons, in the fidelity of their dependents: husbands and wives, parents and children, exercised the natural affections, and relied on their being reciprocated: all the relations of life were adorned in turn with bright instances of devotion, and mankind transacted their business with an ordinary confidence in the force of conscience and right reason. The steady development of enlightened legal principles conclusively proves the general dependence upon law as a guide and corrector of manners. In the camp however, more especially, as the chief sphere of this purifying activity, the great qualities of the Roman character continued to be plainly manifested. The history of the Cæsars presents to us a constant succession of brave, patient, resolute, and faithful soldiers, men deeply impressed with a sense of duty, superior to vanity, despisers of boasting, content to toil in obscurity and shed their blood at the frontiers of the empire, unrepining at the cold mistrust of their masters, not clamorous for the honours so sparingly awarded them, but satisfied in the daily work of their hands, and full of faith in the national destiny which they were daily accomplishing. If such humble instruments of society around them are not to be compared for the importance of their mission with the votaries of speculative wisdom, who protested in their lives and in their deaths against the crimes of their generation, there is still something touching in the simple heroism of these chiefs of the legions, of which we have met already with some bright examples, and shall encounter many more,—the heroism of a Plautius, a Suetonius, a Vespasian, a Corbulo, and an Agricola,—which preserves to us in unbroken succession the features of the Scipios, the Catos, the

*Æmili*, and the *Marcelli*. Here are virtues, not to be named indeed with the zeal of missionaries and the devotion of martyrs, but worthy nevertheless of a high place in the esteem of all who reverence human nature, which may prove, in the teeth of some thoughtless fanatics, that the age was not utterly degraded which furnished the first votaries to the Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

The acceptance of Christianity we should consider not so much a strong reaction from the prevailing wickedness of the age, as a symptom of the aspirations struggling beneath its surface, and of its anxious demand for moral convictions. I have shown in another place that the Gospel was not embraced, on its first promulgation in Judea, by the despair of the most wretched outcasts of humanity, but rather by the hopeful enthusiasm which urges those who enjoy a portion of the goods of life to improve and fortify their possession. And so again at Rome we have no reason to suppose that Christianity was only the refuge of the afflicted and miserable; rather, if we may lay any stress upon the monuments above referred to, it was first embraced by persons in a certain grade of comfort and respectability; by persons approaching to what we should call *the middle classes* in their condition, their education and their moral views. Of this class Seneca himself was the idol, the oracle: he was, so to say, the favourite preacher of the more intelligent and humane disciples of nature and virtue. Now the writings of Seneca show, in their way, a real anxiety among this class to raise the moral tone of mankind around them: a spirit of reform, a zeal for the conver-

Christianity congenial to certain moral tendencies of the age.

<sup>1</sup> These remarks, I know, are liable to misconstruction, but it seems a duty to protest against the common tendency of Christian moralists to dwell only on the dark side of Pagan society, in order to heighten by contrast the blessings of the Gospel. The argument becomes dangerous when the treatment of it is unfair. The pretensions advanced by such an advocate as Count Champagny for the Roman Church, which alone he identifies with Christianity, to be the sole depository of all moral principles and practice, are distressing to those who reflect how fearfully they have been belied by the result.

sion of souls, which, though it never rose indeed, under the teaching of the philosophers, to boiling heat, still simmered with genial warmth on the surface of society. Far different as was their social standing point, far different as were the foundations and the presumed sanctions of their teaching respectively, Seneca and St. Paul were both moral reformers; both, be it said with reverence, were fellow-workers in the cause of humanity, though the Christian could look beyond the proximate aims of morality, and prepare men for a final development on which the Stoic could not venture to gaze. Hence there is so much in their principles, so much even in their language, which agrees together, so that the one has been thought, though it must be allowed without adequate reason, to have borrowed directly from the other.<sup>1</sup> But the philosopher, be it remembered, discoursed to a large and not inattentive audience, and surely the soil was not all unfruitful on which his seed was scattered, when he proclaimed that *God dwells not in temples of wood or stone, nor wants the ministrations of human hands:*<sup>2</sup> *that He has no delight in the blood of victims:*<sup>3</sup> *that He is near to all his creatures:*<sup>4</sup> *that His spirit resides in men's hearts:*<sup>5</sup> *that all men are truly His offspring:*<sup>6</sup> *that we are members of one body, which is God or nature:*<sup>7</sup> *that men must believe in God before they can approach Him:*<sup>8</sup> *that the true service of God is to be like unto Him:*<sup>9</sup> *that all men have sinned,*

<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to refer to the pretended letters between St. Paul and Seneca. Besides the evidence from style, some of the dates they contain are quite sufficient to condemn them as clumsy forgeries. They are mentioned, but with no expression of belief in their genuineness, by Jerome and Augustine. See Jones, *On the Canon*, ii. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Senec. *Ep.* 95., and in Lactantius, *Inst.* vi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* 116.: "Colitur Deus non tauris sed pia et recta voluntate."

<sup>4</sup> *Ep.* 41. 78.

<sup>5</sup> *Ep.* 46.: "Sacer intra nos spiritus sedet."

<sup>6</sup> *De Provid.* l.

<sup>7</sup> *Ep.* 98. 95.: "Membra sumus magni corporis."

<sup>8</sup> *Ep.* 95.: "Præter Deorum cultus est Deos credere."

<sup>9</sup> *Ep.* 95.: "Satis coluit quisquis imitatus est."

*and none performed all the works of the law :<sup>1</sup> that God is no respecter of nations, ranks, or conditions, but all, barbarian and Roman, bond and free, are alike under His all-seeing Providence.\**

St. Paul enjoined submission and obedience even to the tyranny of Nero, and Seneca fosters no ideas subversive of political subjection. Endurance is the paramount virtue of the Stoic. To forms of government the wise man was wholly indifferent; they were among the external circumstances above which his spirit soared in serene self-contemplation. We trace in Seneca no yearning for a restoration of political freedom, nor does he even point to the senate, after the manner of the patriots of the day, as a legitimate check to the autocracy of the despot. The only mode, in his view, of tempering tyranny is to educate the tyrant himself in virtue. His was the self-denial of the Christians, but without their anticipated compensation. It seems impossible to doubt that in his highest flights of rhetoric,—and no man ever recommended the unattainable with a finer grace,—Seneca must have felt that he was labouring to build up a house without foundations; that his system, as Caius said of his style, was sand without lime. He was surely not unconscious of the inconsistency of his own position, as a public man and a minister, with the theories to which he had wedded himself; and of the impossibility of preserving in it the purity of his character as a philosopher or a man. He was aware that in the existing state of society at Rome, wealth was necessary to men high in station: wealth

Seneca's political and moral teaching.

Inconsistency between his teaching and his conduct.

<sup>1</sup> Senec. *de Ira*, i. 14.; ii. 27.: "Quis est iste qui se profitetur omnibus legibus innocentem?"

<sup>2</sup> *De Benef.* iii. 18.: "Virtus omnes admittit libertinos, servos, reges." These and many other passages are collected by Champagny, ii. 546., after Fabricius and others, and compared with well-known texts in Scripture. The version of the Vulgate shows a great deal of verbal correspondence. M. Trolong remarks, after De Maistre, that Seneca has written a fine book on Providence, for which there was not even a name at Rome in the time of Cicero. *L'Influence du Christianisme*, &c., i. ch. 4.



alone could retain influence, and a poor minister became at once contemptible. The distributor of the imperial favours must have his banquets, his receptions, his slaves and freed-men; he must possess the means of attracting if not of bribing; he must not seem too virtuous, too austere, among an evil generation; in order to do good at all he must swim with the stream, however polluted it might be. All this inconsistency Seneca must have contemplated without blenching; and there is something touching in the serenity he preserved amidst the conflict that must have perpetually raged between his natural sense and his acquired principles. Both Cicero and Seneca were men of many weaknesses, and we remark them the more because both were pretenders to unusual strength of character: but while Cicero lapsed into political errors, Seneca cannot be absolved of actual crime. Nevertheless, if we may compare the greatest masters of Roman wisdom together, the Stoic will appear, I think, the more earnest of the two, the more anxious to do his duty for its own sake, the more sensible of the claims of mankind upon him for such precepts of virtuous living as he had to give. In an age of unbelief and compromise, he taught that Truth was positive and Virtue objective. He conceived, what never entered Cicero's mind, the idea of improving his fellow-creatures: he had, what Cicero had not, a heart for conversion to Christianity.

The advance of moral principles between the age of Cicero and Seneca is strongly marked by the favour with which the expression has been received that the Stoic was *enveloped, as it were, in the atmosphere of Christianity*.<sup>1</sup> We possess one other small volume of the moral teaching of the time, comprising the six satires of

Aulus Persius a  
teacher of  
Stoicism.

<sup>1</sup> Troplong, l. c., who cannot altogether give up the significance of the phrase, "Seneca noster," so common with the fathers of the church. See St. Jerome, *de Script. Eccl.* c. 12.; Tertull. *de Anim.* 1.; August. *de Civ. Dei.* vi. 10. He adds: "Sa correspondance avec S. Paul, quoique apocryphe, ne vaudrait pas d'ailleurs comme mythe?" I have already mentioned the coincidence of the use of "caro" in Seneca and St. Paul. Troplong says that "angelus"

the poet Persius, himself also a Stoic, and a pupil of the Stoic Cornutus, the friend and probably the freedman of the family of Seneca. Aulus Persius was born in the year 787, and died in the middle of Nero's reign, at the early age of twenty-eight. Possessed of ample means, and with weakly health, he engaged in no public affairs, but devoted himself entirely to philosophical speculation, to which he did honour by the purity and simplicity of his private life. The fastidiousness, perhaps, rather than the ardour of his virtue urged him to step forth as a moral reformer: the passion of his contemporaries for verse composition suggested to him the vehicle of poetical satire rather than of prose dissertation; and his lucubrations, curious and not uninteresting as they are, have doubtless been preserved to us only by the accident of the form in which they have been conveyed. Of the poetical merit of these singular compositions I have no occasion here to speak: they have been variously judged; but those who have criticized most severely their jejuneness in thought and general crabbedness of expression, have done scant justice to the smartness of observation and felicity of language with which they occasionally glitter.<sup>1</sup> In a moral point of view, however, they are not without their significance. A comparison of the satires of Persius with those of Horace may serve to mark the progress of the age in ethical principles. Horace shoots folly as it flies: his bolts are either flung at random for his own amusement, or, as I have elsewhere suggested, have a covert political object: there is neither love of truth, nor indignation at vice, nor scorn of baseness, nor a

occurs also in its biblical sense in the writings of the philosopher. But the great subject of the presumed influence of Christianity on the moral teaching of this and later periods may be conveniently reserved for another occasion. M. Denis, in his recent work, *Idées Morales dans l'Antiquité*, has traced some Christian maxims far back into the region of heathen philosophy.

<sup>1</sup> M. Nisard's judgment on Persius is harsh and unfair (*Études sur les Poètes Lat. de la Décadence*, i. 201.) The passages from Boileau which he cites in comparison are sufficient to demonstrate the superiority of the third in rank of the Roman satirists over the first of the moderns.

generous wish to amend error. But Persius is not a man of the world amusing himself with his fellow-creatures; he is a philosopher seeking to understand them, and still further, he is a philosopher of the age and school of Seneca, really anxious to instruct them. He recalls men to true wisdom by showing not the sin or folly, or the evil consequences of their passions, but their inconsistency. Men and women, he lets us know, are not true philosophers: they say one thing and do another, in youth and age, in public and private life, in the street and in the chamber, with no intention to deceive, but from defective education.<sup>1</sup> Genuine philosophy alone can teach them to choose the right path and to keep it: this is the training which makes men true to themselves and to society. This is a wisdom which it is in the power of every man to attain: and this wisdom he shows us by his own example is *Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose, but musical as is Apollo's lute*. The philosophy of the Porch was never so persuasively recommended as by the charming verses in which Persius sings of the influence Cornutus exercised on his youthful affections, and the perfect harmony which subsisted in heart and soul between the master and the pupil, into whose purged ear he had instilled the fruitful seed of Cleanthes.<sup>2</sup>

It has been supposed that, in his strictures on the bad taste of contemporary versifiers, Persius has covertly reflect-

<sup>1</sup> Thus, the temple-worshipper is inconsistent when he thinks he can seduce the pure and holy gods (ii. 4.): the tyrant, who thinks himself powerful but is really the slave of his terrors (iii. 42.): the sick man who resents his physician's advice (iii. 88.). Every man pretends to be different from what he really is (iv. 28.). Men acknowledge the necessity of wisdom, but put off seeking it (v. 66.). They seek for liberty and fancy they have gained it, when they are really slaves to vice and passion (v. 125.).

<sup>2</sup> Persius, *Sat.* v. 45.:

"Non equidem hoc dubites amborum fœdere certo  
Consentire dies, et ab uno sidere nasci. . . .  
Cultor enim juvenum purgatas inseris aures  
Frugè Cleanthes. Petite hinc, juvenesque senesque,  
Finem animo certum, miserisque viatica canis."

ed on the effeminacy of Nero's own compositions.' Be this as it may, it should be remembered that the poet was dead before the prince had made himself generally infamous for worse faults than those of style and sentiment. Nevertheless, it is deserving of remark that the sage, the moralist, the reformer, has not uttered a single word on the political aspect of the times; no breath of indignation at the servile submission of his countrymen, of consolation for broken-hearted patriots, of encouragement for the few gallant spirits who still might hope for better days to come. Persius betrays no consciousness of the degradation of his countrymen, nor yearning for the recovery of their ancient liberties. A single allusion to the freedom of the Athenians of old suggests only the recollection of the deceptions practised upon them by their demagogues:<sup>1</sup> to the Senate, once the real bulwark of Roman independence, still something more than the mere shadow of a great name, he makes no allusion whatever. The philosopher, like the Christian, is content that men should work out the appointed end of their being under the circumstances in which Providence has placed them.

No political philosophy in the writings of Persius.

A more important contribution to the history of mind and opinion at this period, is supplied by the *Pharsalia* of Lucan, a work doubly interesting, both from its own peculiar merits as a poem, and from the fate of its distinguished author. Lucan, as we have seen, was the chosen companion of Nero's early days, being of about the same age, and showing much of the ready and brilliant talent which might charm a youth of Nero's temper and accomplishments. The stories that are told of their rivalry in poetical exertations; of the success of the subject and the jealousy of the prince; of the taunts with which the one resented this jealousy, and the other's revenge by forbidding him to recite in public;

The "*Pharsalia*" of Lucan.

Tradition of the relations between Lucan and Nero accounted for.

<sup>1</sup> Pers. Sat. i. 99. foll.

<sup>2</sup> Persius, Sat. iv. 20.:

"Dinomaches ego sum, suffla; sum candidus: esto:  
Dum ne deterius sapiat pannucea Bancis."

finally, of the stifled wrath which led the offended bard to conspire against the tyrant's life;—all these may in the main be true, though possibly coloured and exaggerated. For my own part, I am disposed to believe that they grew out of an attempt to account for the change of sentiment,—as it appears at least to an ordinary observer,—between the commencement and the continuation of Lucan's poem. We have remarked already the vehement strain of panegyric upon Nero which ushers in the great Epic of the Civil Wars: and when we consider that the author perished at the age of twenty-six, in the eleventh year of Nero's reign, we can hardly throw back the period of this dedication to the golden era of the Quinquennium. It must be allowed that the tyrant had already revealed much of the evil of his character when the courtier dared to canonize his virtues; if the stern republicanism of the poem as it advances was an afterthought, it cannot be excused on the common plea, that the vices of tyranny were undiscovered at its commencement.

Lucan not inconsistent in his flattery of Nero.

But after all, this presumed change is a gratuitous imputation. To Nero himself, after the opening invocation, there is no farther allusion; and if, as the current of his verse rolls on, his appeals to the spirit of liberty and denunciations of tyranny become more vehement and frequent, we must not suppose that Lucan regarded the principate as a tyranny, or, till the last moment of personal pique or indignation, the prince himself as a tyrant.<sup>1</sup> It would be a still greater mistake to represent the panegyric on Nero as covert irony. Lucan was perfectly in earnest. The poem, as we know, was left unfinished at his death, and though the books may have been successively recited to friends, it was not, as far as we can judge, definitively pub-

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the *Pharsalia* there is no stronger expression of republican indignation than in lines which occur towards the end of the first book:

“Superos quid prodest poscere finem?  
Cum domino pax ista venit: duc, Roma, malorum  
Continuam seriem, clademque in tempora multa  
Extrahе, civili tantum jam libera bello.”

lished in the author's lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Whatever his cause of quarrel might be, I suppose that Lucan, had he deliberately changed his opinion on the necessity of a chief ruler, might have taken measures for expunging the passage in which it is so emphatically asserted.

But we must not deceive ourselves. Lucan was a vehement patriot. He was an ardent admirer of the historic liberties of his country. He sighed from wounded pride and offended virtue, at the remembrance of the latter days of the republic; and believed that Rome had forfeited her appointed privilege of universal conquest since she surrendered the pledges of her freedom.<sup>2</sup> But what was the freedom he so fiercely regretted? It was the rule of his own class, the licence to enjoy the fruits of conquest claimed, seized, and jealously guarded by the nobles and senate in defiance of the rights of every other class of citizens, of the subject provincials, and of the world at large. Critics have asked, who is the hero of the *Pharsalia*? Is it Cæsar, or Pompeius, or Cato? It is none of the three, it may be answered; it is the Senate. Liberty and the Senate are for ever in the poet's mouth, as correlative terms; but he has no yearnings for the people: of the knights as an order in the state he never once speaks.<sup>3</sup> The Senate is his idol, its temple is the Curia, and its priests are the consuls: but he has no incense for tribunes and chiefs of the Comitia and the

Lucan a partisan of the senate, not of the people.

<sup>1</sup> Collections of small poems such as odes, epigrams, and satires, were published in separate books; but we know of the *Æneid*, and we may infer the same of other works of similar pretensions, that portions were first recited to select audiences, but the poem reserved for publication as a whole. The same appears to have been the case with the *Metamorphoses*. The story that the first three books of the *Pharsalia* were corrected and published by the writer comes from an old commentary of no authority. They are in no respect more correct than the later books.

<sup>2</sup> Lucan, *Pharsa.* vii. 426.:

"Sed retro tua fata tulit, par omnibus annis,  
Emathis funesta dies: hæc luce cruenta  
Effectum, ut Latios non horreat India fasces;" &c.

<sup>3</sup> The complacency with which the Senate is assumed to be the governing

Forum. The idea he had conceived of the polity of the Republic was a dignified oligarchy of patrician nobles, born to sway the voters of the Campus from the steps of the temple of Bellona, to stride without partners or rivals over every province of the empire they had acquired by the blood of their plebeian clients. The descendants of the fallen oligarchy, in the ardour of their pretended patriotism, had completely forgotten the tribes, as an element of their ancient constitution, and in their aspirations for the revival of liberty never dreamed of restoring to them any portion of their power. In the emperor's principate or first place in the senate they fully acquiesced; they did not grudge him his seat of honour between the consuls; it was of his tribunate, his championship of the people, that they were alone really jealous. The idea they entertained of a glorious revolution was

He had no wish to abolish the empire, only to subordinate the emperor to the senate.

not the abolition of the empire; they desired only to eliminate from it the popular element, and restrict it solely to a government through the senate. They would have suffered their chief to command their armies, as long as he held his command by decree of the senate, not by a law of the people. They would have felt it as no encroachment on their special rights that he should sway half the provinces as imperator or pro-consul. Such of the emperors as had sought to gain the favour of the aristocracy had sedulously humoured these selfish views. Nero, following the precepts of Augustus and the example of Claudius, had sunk the tribune in the princeps, and accordingly Nero was long popular with the senators. It was not till he began in his caprice to make war upon them

order of the state is very instructive. See particularly the opening of the fifth book of the *Pharsalia*

"Docuit populos venerabilis Ordo  
Non Magni partes, sed Magnum in partibus esse. . . .  
Cunctaque *jussuri* primum hoc decernite Patres. . . .  
Consulte in medium, Patres, Magnumque *jubete*  
Esse *ducem*. . . "

With equal complacency the people are left to Cæsar, v. 382. 392., &c.

personally that he became personally hateful to them; but even then his government, still administered to a great extent by their order, retained its hold on their consideration, and the fiercest patriots among them never contemplated its overthrow. They might hope to remove Nero from its head, and to replace him by a puppet of their own; but even Lucan himself, the disciple of Cato, when he girded himself like Brutus with a dagger to take Cæsar's life, had no thought of restoring the republic of free elections and popular magistracies. We shall find, as we proceed in this history, that Tacitus himself, a patriot of calmer judgment, was abundantly satisfied when he found the senate placed ostensibly at the head of affairs, and the emperors affecting to be no more than its hand and its mouth-piece. Under Nerva and Trajan the Roman liberals believed that they had recovered the days of Catulus and Pompeius.

But to Lucan, after all, whatever it might be to men of more reflection and experience, the idea of the senate was a mere phantom, an abstraction of the imagination. Our poet was a youth, bred a declaimer of the schools, the child and pupil of declaimers and rhetoricians, and his mind had never been opened either by training or observation to views of actual life. It had become irksome to men of age and experience to mingle in public affairs which they were not suffered to conduct, and the young competitors for civil distinction were left without control to indulge the ardour of speculative opinion. There was no moral check on their thoughts, none on their speech: the new impulse given to popular composition by the advent of Nero to power raised a race of schoolboys to illegitimate authority in the world of letters. *Young Rome* of the time of Nero was eminently conceited, and I fear eminently shallow. Placing Seneca at their head, as is the wont of the rising generation to shelter under a great name its own conscious self-distrust, the favourites of the prince, accepted at the same time as the favourites of the multitude, overbore the finest taste and judgment of the veterans of literature. The

Characteristics  
of Lucan and  
his contemporaries.



faults and vices of youth were admired, humoured, and stimulated. Reserve and modesty, persevering toil, patient self-examination, were regarded as irksome in themselves, and as a reflection on the character of the prince. Talent flourished in such an atmosphere, as in a forcing-house, but it was no climate for the natural ripening of genius. The wit and cleverness of Lucan, considering his years, are preternatural: the trumpet-tones of his scorn or admiration, after more than thirty years' familiarity, still thunder in my ears with startling intensity: but he has no divination of men and things; his imagination never clothes itself in the costume of the past; he is never transported out of himself; he never *saw* the conqueror of the Gauls; he never *trod* the plains of Emathia. If he is to be compared at all with the inspired singer of the *Æneid*, pensive, passionate, and abstracted, I know not what more to his advantage can be said, than the remark of Statius, that the Epic of Lucan was an earlier effort than the first prolusions of Virgil.<sup>1</sup>

Next to Liberty Lucan chanted the praises of Philosophy, and his views of the one had as little of truth and sense as of the other. He proclaimed himself a follower of the Stoics, and no man has set forth their views, such as he conceived them, with more spirited and sounding phrases. If, however, we examine them, we discover in them all the vagueness and uncertainty of the teaching of the day; it is impossible to gather from the verses of Lucan whether the poet or his masters believed in the existence of the gods, or moral government of the world. These doctrines are repeatedly asserted, and again not less repeatedly denied.<sup>2</sup> Fate, the idol of the Stoics, plays a great part on

Lucan's views  
of philosophy.

<sup>1</sup> Statius, *Sylv.* ii. 7. 73.:

"Hæc primo juvenis canes sub ævo  
Ante annos Culiôis Maroniani."

According to the life of Lucan ascribed to Suetonius, this was the poet's own boastful comparison: "Et quantum mihi restat ad Calicem!"

<sup>2</sup> The *Pharsalia* is full of auguries, visions, and other testimonies to super-

the Pharsalian stage; yet once, at least, the poet does not scruple to declare his uncertainty whether Apollo prophesies that which is fated, or fate is that which Apollo prophesies.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, in his view at least one manifest destiny, the law of nature which justifies Rome's dominion over the world. While he throws aside the old contracted notions of the individuality of nations, and affirms, with the emphasis of Seneca, the common origin and rights of all mankind, he never shrinks from the glaring inconsistency of his creed as a Roman with his creed as a philosopher.

Nevertheless this philosophy, crude as it is, has availed to soften his feelings at least in one particular. No Roman poet dwells with such warmth as Lucan on the sentiment of conjugal affection.<sup>2</sup> There is a sweetness in more than one passage of the *Pharsalia*, where

His general deficiency in imagination.

it pauses on its stately march to indulge in a moment's tenderness, which little harmonizes with its author's general harshness, and may be taken as a tribute perhaps to the merits of a consort worthy of his genius, whose devotion to his memory was recorded in fitting strains by the next generation.<sup>3</sup> But this appreciation of the gentle influence which

natural power: the author repeatedly invokes the gods; but he makes no use of mythological machinery, and more than once expressly denies the existence of a superintending Providence: vii. 447. 454.:

"Mentimur regnare Jovem . . . . mortalia nulli  
Sunt curata Deo."

<sup>1</sup> *Phars.* v. 92.:

"Sive canit fatum, seu, quod jubet ipse, cuncpo  
Fit fatum."

<sup>2</sup> Comp. the passion of Pompeius and Cornelia, v. 725-815., viii. 40-158., ix. 51-116. Even the sterner esteem of Cato and Marcia has a touch of sentiment and enthusiasm.

<sup>3</sup> Statius, l c. 120.:

"Adsis lucidus, et vocante Polla,  
Unum, quasso, dicam Deos silentum  
Exores; solet hoc patere limen  
Ad nuptas redeuntibus maritis.  
Hæc te non thiasis procax dolosis  
Falsi numinis induit figuras;

soothes most effectively the ills of life, is beyond the experience of youth, and shows a power of imagination in Lucan which we miss with regret in many passages of his Epic more brilliant in conception, and more sonorous in language. His general deficiency indeed in this faculty is most strikingly exhibited in the descriptions of physical suffering in which he seems to revel. His ever-recurring pictures of death and wounds, of diseases and famines, are coarse material painting, in which he only aims at representing vividly the scenes he has himself witnessed in the amphitheatres, or possibly in the streets of his own city. He has treasured up in his mind all the horrors which have been presented to his senses, nor has he the art or delicacy to create the effect required by generalities and abstractions. This is the common fault of young writers; it is to be feared, however, that it was eminently the fault of the age also; it sprang from the hard materialism engendered by sensual indulgence, from a terrible familiarity with objects the most painful and disgusting, and a cynical freedom of life and conversation.

Another feature of Lucan's *Pharsalia* is its affectation of encyclopædic knowledge, not perhaps characteristic of the man himself so much as of the period which boasted the vast compilations of Strabo's Geography and Pliny's Natural History. Astronomy and astrology, geography mathematical and terrestrial, antiquities and philosophy, mythology and navigation,—all these branches of science have their attractions for the young academician: wild and confused as his views of them often are, caught up from the teaching of many masters, and never as it seems digested in the mind of the pupil, they exhibit the appetite of the age for indiscriminate knowledge, an age of facts rather than of principles.<sup>1</sup> They afford a glimpse of

Affectation of  
encyclopædic  
knowledge.

Ipsum sed colit et frequentat ipsum,  
Imis altius insitum medullis."

Comp. Martial, vii. 21.

<sup>1</sup> Among other passages the reader may be referred for Lucan's ideas of astronomy to ix. 531.; of astrology to i. 660.; of geography to i. 396., ii. 399

the diversified subjects of intellectual occupation and moral interest which a world-wide empire afforded, when all the races of mankind, their climes and their characters, seemed brought into one focus. Amidst the material luxury and the rampant vices of the times, they show that there was still room for mental cultivation, which must have kept many hearts pure and single, and arrested the degeneracy of society. By literature, and possibly by domestic interests, Lucan seems himself to have been saved from the contagion around him. His poem, considering the atmosphere of voluptuousness in which he moved, is singularly free from all indelicacy of thought and language.<sup>1</sup> Modesty, indeed, was a tradition of the Roman Epic; vices which passed current in every circle of contemporary society are never so much as named by the singers of the life heroic: but that Lucan should exhibit the same instinct as Virgil, that Cæsar and Pompeius should be robed for us in the decent drapery of Æneas and Turnus, is much to the credit of the poet, and possibly of his age also. It would seem that amidst the general dissolution of principles some ideas retained their influence and enforced a religious self-restraint; wild as was the licence of the age, it had its recognised limits; a certain sense of decorum, however illogical we may deem it, still preserved its sway over the chartered libertines of Rome.<sup>2</sup> It may be added that while

iii. 171., iv. 51., vi. 333., ix. 411., x. 268.; of history to ii. 69., x. 20.; of antiquities to ix. 950.; of philosophy to ii. l. 286., ix. 564.; of mythology to iv. 593., ix. 519.; of navigation to viii. 168.

<sup>1</sup> Lucan is described to us as a wealthy idler: Juvenal, vii. 79.

"Contentus fama jaceat Lucanus in hortis Marmoreis."

He was born at Corduba in Spain, but of Roman parents, and neither his father Mella, nor his uncles Seneca and Gallio, betrayed the simplicity of a provincial extraction. The notion of Quintilian that his rhetorical style savoured of Spanish turgidity, and the compliments of Statius to his native Bætia, are more fanciful than sound. See however *Sylv.* ii. 7. 33.:

"Attollat refluos in astra fontes  
Graio nobilior Melete Bætis:  
Bætin, Mantua, provocare noli."

<sup>2</sup> The purity of the *Pharsalia* is equal to that of the *Æneid*, and the same

professed philosophers spoke with doubt and anxiety, and at best with faint hope, of the prospect of a future state, Lucan faithful to the common sentiment of poetry, and the universal aspirations of unsophisticated nature, expresses at one time the popular belief in its existence, and philosophic conceptions of its character at another.<sup>1</sup>

may be said of the later epics of Silius, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus. Lucan's moral perceptions are more just than Virgil's; bating some exaggerated expressions of vindictiveness, they are a very fair reflection of the teaching of his masters the Stoics. I must censure, however, his tenderness for the accursed Domitius, who dying forsooth, "*Venia gaudet caruisse secunda.*"—*Phars.* vii. 604.

<sup>1</sup> The scorn Lucan throws on the Druidical doctrine of transmigration, l. 455., implies no denial of a spiritual immortality. On the other hand, the reality of the future life, as a state of retribution, is strongly set forth in many passages: see particularly vi. 782., vii. 816., and the sublime canonization of Pompeius, ix. l.:

"At non in Pharia manes jacuere favilla,  
Nec cinis exigua tantam composescit Umbram:  
Prosluit busto, semiustaque membra relinquens,  
Degeneremque rogam, sequitur convexa Tonantia. . . .  
Semidei Manes habitant, quos ignea virtus,  
Innocuos vitæ, patientes ætheris imi  
Fecit, et æternos animam collegit in orbem."

## CHAPTER LV.

THE EMPEROR NERO: HIS FIGURE AND CHARACTER.—THE SENATE: REDUCED IN NUMBERS BY PROSCRIPTION; LOWERED IN ESTIMATION: IMPOVERISHMENT OF THE OLD FAMILIES, BUT GENERAL INCREASE OF WEALTH IN THE UPPER RANKS.—THE COMMONALTY DIVIDED INTO TWO CLASSES.—THE PROVINCIALS: THE PRÆTORIANS; THE LEGIONS.—INDEPENDENCE OF THE PROCONSULS.—ACCOUNT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA.—EXPLOITS OF CORBULO.—NERO VISITS GREECE: HIS PERSONAL DISPLAYS THERE.—DEATH OF CORBULO.—INDIGNATION OF THE ROMANS AT NERO'S SELF-ABASEMENT.—VINDEX CONSPIRES AGAINST HIM.—REVOLT OF GALBA AND VIRGINIUS.—GALBA PROCLAIMED EMPEROR BY HIS SOLDIERS.—NERO'S RETURN TO ROME AND TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.—HIS DESPICABLE PUBILLANITY.—HIS LAST HOURS AND DEATH.—(A. D. 66., A. U. 819.—A. D. 68., A. U. 821.)

**B**ENEATH the ostensible records which have been left us of the last three Cæsars, we may seem to detect traces, as it were, now almost obliterated, of another and more legitimate writing. It may not be impossible, I conceive, to reconstruct the true character of Tiberius, by freeing it from the distortions of the glosses with which it has been overlaid. If there remain less distinct traces of the real portraiture of Caius and Claudius, we have discovered nevertheless unquestionable evidence of gross perversions of the truth, which must throw doubt on the genuineness of the lineaments in which they have been commonly presented. With regard to Nero, however, the case, it must be allowed, is different. The invalidation, indeed, of the testimony of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion in the earlier instances renders them justly suspected in this also; the accounts of the two last-named writers especially seem in some respects quite incredible: nevertheless I am constrained to add that no out-

The account of Nero given by our authorities must be accepted as substantially correct.

lines of a truer character are elsewhere discoverable, and with some allowance only for extravagance of colouring, we must accept in the main the verisimilitude of the picture they have left us of this arch-tyrant, the last and the most detestable of the Cæsarean family.

The youth who at the age of seventeen years was called to govern the civilized world, is represented in his busts and medals as handsome in countenance, but, as Suetonius remarks, without grace or winningness of expression.<sup>1</sup> His hair was not the bright auburn of Apollo, the delight of the Romans, to which it was so often likened, but yellowish or sandy: his figure, though of middle stature, was ill-proportioned, the neck was thick and sensual, the stomach prominent, the legs slender. His skin, it is added, was blotched or pimpled; but this, it may be supposed, was the effect of intemperance in his later years; his eyes were dark gray or greenish, and their sight defective, which may account perhaps for the scowl which seems to mark their expression. His health, notwithstanding his excesses, continued good to the end, and it was only from anxious concern for his voice that he wrapped his throat in kerchiefs, like a confirmed valetudinarian.<sup>2</sup> In his dress there was a mixture of slovenliness and finery; in the arrangement of his cherished locks he was exceedingly careful, piling them in tiers above the crown, and letting them fall from thence over the shoulders, a fashion which was reputed not less indecent, or at least effeminate, than the looseness of his cincture, the bareness of his feet, and the lightness of the chamber-robe in which he did not scruple to appear in public.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 61.: "Vultu pulchro magis quam venusto." This distinction between "pulcher" and "venustus" is well supported from the authorities by Doederlein. Comp. especially Catull. lxxvi. On the passage in Suetonius he makes the comment: "d. h. er hatte mehr vollkommen und regelmässig Schöne als angenehme Züge, und war also eine herzlose kalte Schönheit zu der sich niemand hingezogen fühlt."—*Synonym.* iii. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. l. c.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. l. c.: "Synthesinam indutus:" explained by the commentators by "vestem cubitoriam" (*χιτώριον ἀνδρῶν*, Dion, lxiii. 13.), the "thalassina ves-

We may trace perhaps to the character of his master, and to the kind of education he was likely to receive from him, the ardent love of admiration, ill-directed as it was, which distinguished the pupil of Seneca. To <sup>Nero's love of admiration.</sup> this constant anxiety to compete with rivals, and triumph over them, however trifling the objects on which it was exercised, may be ascribed the indifference Nero evidently felt to the title of divinity, which in his inordinate vanity he might have been expected to claim.<sup>1</sup> He wanted to be admired as the first among men, not to be adored as a god. He could not be Apollo, and contend at the same time for the prize of the Pythian games: he could not be Hercules, and carry off the chaplet at Nemea: he could not be Jupiter, and gain the victory at the great contest of Olympia;—distinctions on which his soul was bent from an early period of his career, and which, as we shall see, he lived eventually to achieve. His courtiers might, if they pleased, pronounce his likeness to these or any other divinities; but to make him actually divine was to rob him of the honours he so vehemently affected. The poets might predict his apotheosis after death, and doubtless the verses in which Lucan, at that time his friend and companion, challenged him to choose what godship he would assume in heaven, and where he would fix his throne; imploring him to take his seat in the middle of the universe, lest if he leaned ever so little from the centre the world should be thrown by his august weight from its eter-

ties," as I conceive, of Lucretius. The long loose robe was the garb also of the lyrist: "*Statuas suas citharœdico habitu,*" &c. *Suet. Ner.* 25. Eckhel compares Virgil, *Æn.* vi. 645.:

"Necnon Threicius longa cum veste sacerdos  
Obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum."

<sup>1</sup> We have seen how the proposal of Anicius Cerialis to erect a temple to Nero was repudiated. *Tac. Ann.* xv. ult. It should be remarked, however, that there are specimens of gold and silver medals, the imperial coinage, in which the head of Nero is encircled with rays. These may be regarded as an emblem of divinity, unless they are meant only to indicate his rivalry with the sun-god Apollo. See Eckhel, vi. 269. The bust of Nero in the Louvre is also radiated. Müller, *Archæol. der Kunst.* 198.



nal balance;—such verses were doubtless accepted as a fitting tribute to the germ of a divine existence hereafter to blossom into flower.<sup>1</sup> But the ardour with which Nero aspired to distinctions among mortal men was itself a guarantee against his usurping the character of the impassive godhead, which can neither enjoy a triumph nor suffer a disgrace.

Nor again, though described by Tacitus as *lusting after the incredible*, had Nero the same passion as Caius for realizing apparent impossibilities to prove his superhuman power.<sup>2</sup> He was not impelled in a career of marvels by restless and aimless pride. Once removed from the sphere of theatrical shows and contests, he had no higher notion of his position than as enabling him to accumulate, to multiply, or to enlarge the commonest objects of luxury. He never travelled, it is asserted, with less than

His vulgar  
ideas of mag-  
nificence.

<sup>1</sup> Lucan, i. 45.:

“Te, cum statione peracta  
Astra petes serus, prælati regia cœli  
Accipiet, gaudente polo: seu sceptra tenere,  
Seu te flamamigeros Phœbi conscendere currus,  
Telluremque nihil mutato Sole timentem  
Igne vago lustrare juvet; tibi numine ab omni  
Cedetur, jurisque tui Natura relinquet  
Quis Deus esse velis, ubi regnum ponere Mundi. . . .  
Ætheris immensi partem si presseris unam  
Sentiet axis onus; librati pondera cœli  
Orbe tene medio.”

In the fragment ascribed to the poet Turnus, the Muses are accused of prostituting themselves to Nero, and paying him divine honours:

“Quis genus ab Jove summo,  
Asse merent vili, ac sancto se corpore fœdant . . .  
Proh! Furias et monstra colunt . . . et quicquid Olympi est  
Transcripsere Erebo. Jamque impia ponere templa  
Sacrilegasque audent aras, cœloque repulsos  
Quondam Terrigenas superis imponere regnis  
Qua licet; et stolido verbis illuditur orbi.”

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus calls him “incredibilium cupitor,” *Ann.* xv. 42., specially with reference to his project of a canal from Avernus to Ostia. He seems greatly to exaggerate the difficulties of the undertaking; perhaps his best comment upon it is: “nec satis causæ.”

a thousand carriages in his train. His banquets were those of the noble debauchees of the day on a still vaster scale of expense: in the height of his extravagance, he would equip his actors with masks or wands covered with genuine pearls; he would stake four hundred thousand sesterces on a single cast of the dice; he bathed in unguents, and stimulated his friends to expend four millions on the perfumes alone of a single supper.<sup>1</sup> His presents to favourites were sums of money so many times greater than had ever been given to favourites before;<sup>2</sup> his buildings were colonnades longer, halls wider, towers higher than had been raised by his predecessors. His projected canal from Puteoli to Rome would only have been the longest of canals; the attempt he latterly made to cut through the isthmus of Corinth was only a repetition of previous attempts, neither better planned, nor more steadfastly persevered in. In his schemes there was nothing new or original. Nero was devoid of the imagination which throws an air of wild grandeur over the character of Caius. The notion that he burnt Rome on purpose to have an opportunity of rebuilding it more magnificently would have been more applicable, as it seems to me, to his predecessor than to him. But within the paltry sphere of his degraded taste he claimed to be pre-eminent. As a mime or player he was not satisfied with any single class of parts, or any one department of exhibition. After rivalling Apollo in song and the Sun in charioteering, he aspired to display the courage and vigour of Hercules, and a lion was duly prepared, drugged or fed to stupor, to be strangled in his arms, or brained with a stroke of his club.<sup>3</sup> He acted, he sang, he played, he danced. He insisted on representing men and heroes, gods

His taste for personal display unrestrained by a sense of decency.

Suet. *Ner.* 27.; Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxvii. 6.; Oros. vii. 7.

<sup>1</sup> Nero, it is said, threw in his lifetime as much as 2200 millions of sesterces (17,600,000*l.*) to his courtiers and freedmen. Tac. *Hist.* i. 20. He covered the theatre of Pompeius with gilding in one day, to exhibit it to his royal visitor Tiridates. Plin. *H. N.* xxiii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 53.

and even goddesses. To affect the woman indeed, in dress, voice, and gesture, was a transformation in which he took a childish pleasure, restrained by no sense of dignity or decency. He adopted his superstitions, as well as his garb and habits, from Syria, from his Parthian and Armenian guests, or from the diviners and necromancers of the credulous East. To the art of magic he devoted wealth, energy, natural abilities, in short, all his resources; but Nature, says Pliny, was too strong for him.<sup>1</sup> His failure to divine the future, or raise the spirits of the dead, was noted by the wise as a signal demonstration of the futility of magical pretensions. For none of the accustomed divinities of Rome did he evince any respect, nor for places consecrated by the national religion; but he revered the Syrian Astarte, till in a fit of vexation he renounced her protection, and insulted her image. At last his sole object of veneration was a little figure of a girl, which he always wore as a talisman about him, and affected to learn from it the secrets of futurity.<sup>2</sup>

Such were the miserable interests of this infatuated creature, the victim of licentious indulgence, a child prematurely stunted both in mind and body, surrounded on the throne not by generals and statesmen, but by troops of slaves or freedmen, by players and dancers lost to all sense of decency themselves, and seeking only their advancement at the expense of their master and of mankind; surrendered by loose women to still more despicable minions, and ruled by the

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 34.: "Quinet facto per Magos sacro evocare manes et exorare tentavit." Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxx. 5.: "Imperare Dis concupivit. . . . ad hæc non opes ei defuere, non vires, non discentis ingenium, allaque, non patiente mundo. Immensum, et indubitatum exemplum est falsæ artis quam dereliquit Nero."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 56.: "Religionum usquequaque contemptor, præter unius Dææ Syriæ. Hanc mox ita sprexit, ut urina contaminaret. . . . iconculam puellam colere perseveravit." Tacitus relates, *Ann.* xiv. 22., how Nero bathed from mere caprice in the spring of the Aqua Marcæ, which was declared sacred, doubtless to protect from impurities the water to be drunk at Rome. A sickness which followed was ascribed to the anger of the Nymph.

most cruel and profligate of ministers. Helius and Tigellinus, Doryphorus and Sporus, are among the most hateful names of the imperial history; into the abominations of their career it would be pollution merely to look. No wonder that, when encircled by so loathsome a crew, he saw the proud citizens prostrate at his feet, he could exclaim that no prince before him had known the extent of his power.<sup>1</sup>

But though at their patron's command statues and arches might rise in honour of these infamous companions, it may be said for the credit of the people, that they received much less of lip-worship than their predecessors, Sejanus, Pallas, and Narcissus. There seems indeed to have risen, at least in the later years of this principate, a marked separation between the court and the nobility: the senators shrank from the presence of a man who so openly degraded his name and lineage; they fled the contact of his dissolute associates; they entered into widespread conspiracies against him, to which they had never been provoked by the tyranny of his predecessors; and they had the merit of incurring his petulant displeasure, with many a threat to extinguish their order altogether, and give the provinces to his knights and freedmen. *I hate you, Caesar*, exclaimed the most refined of his flatterers, *because you are a senator*.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly this emperor, notwithstanding the pomp and splendour of his shows and public appearances, seems to have been left for the most part to the mercenary attendance of his personal favourites, protected only by a troop of spies and informers, and the vilest portion of the pampered populace, from the general detestation of respectable citizens.<sup>3</sup>

Nero's unworthy favourites despised and shunned by the nobles.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 37. "Elatius, inflatusque . . . negavit quicquam principum scisse quid sibi liceret."

<sup>2</sup> Vatinus in Dion, lxiil. 15.: *μωὸν σε, Καίσαρ, διὰ συγκλητικὸς εἶ.* Comp. Suet. *Ner.* 37.

<sup>3</sup> Strange stories are told of the efforts Nero made to retain the better portion of the citizens as spectators of his entertainments, which they found, it is said, insufferably tedious. See Dion, l. c. *ὥστε τινὰς . . . προσποιεῖσθαι τε*

The cruelties of Nero's later years were the more fearful perhaps from their apparent caprice. He had no politic object, such as may be ascribed to Tiberius: of policy indeed he was incapable. Except that his murders were commonly prompted by need or fear, and therefore fell oftenest on the rich and powerful, it can hardly be said that one class suffered from them more terribly than another. His family, his friends, the senators, the knights, philosophers, and Christians, Romans and provincials, were all decimated by them. The natural tenderness of his timid and pliant conscience once seared by crime, there remained no moral strength to resist any evil suggestion: his conduct was that of mere selfish instinct, without an emotion of pity or compunction. Even the terrors of guilt touched him lightly and passed away rapidly.

Undoubtedly, however, the senate furnished the longest list of victims to the tyrant's barbarity. The greatest and noblest were the most exposed to the prince's evil eye, which lighted upon them equally at public ceremonials and private receptions, and marked them for immolation at every fresh burst of ill-humour. The proscriptions to which this body was subjected under the four Claudian Cæsars reduced its numbers considerably, more indeed, it may be imagined, than was replaced by the ordinary sources of replenishment. Claudius, among his other reforms, sought to restore the balance by a special measure, and such was probably the object of his revision of the senate, the last of the kind we read of; but the decline must have been accelerated under Nero, without check or counteraction. Nero, reckless equally of the past and future, felt no anxiety to maintain the numbers of that historic assembly: and the various causes, besides the emperor's tyranny, which were always at work to extinguish the oldest families, must have

His cruelties  
capricious, not  
politic.

Proscriptions  
of the senate.

Its numbers re-  
duced under the  
tyranny of the  
Claudian Cæ-  
sars.

*ἐκθνήσκεν, καὶ νεκρῶν δίκην ἐκ τῶν θεάτρων ἐκφέρεσθαι.* But we may hope there was some moral indignation in their disgust.

acted with terrible force on the effete branches of the ancient aristocracy. But if its numbers were reduced, no less were its employments also. Under the lax discipline of Nero and Tigellinus appointments to office abroad would be the prize of interest and favour, guided neither by routine nor by discretion: at home the boards and commissions established by Augustus would fall into disuse. Pensions and sinecures, though such corruptions are not known to us at Rome by name, would doubtless abound, but of real business there would be less and less. Intrigue and peculation would flourish in a soil protected from the air of public opinion, and the strong hand of central control. The passive endurance which marked the conduct of the senate under the imperial persecutions seems to bespeak a consciousness of its own guilt towards the state, and it compounded for its monopoly of unquestioned abuses by bowing to the yoke of a jealous and domineering master. We discover in Seneca no reliance on the senate. He never speaks of it as a living guardian of the virtues of Roman society. And yet, notwithstanding this abandonment of its high prerogative, it still exercised a moral power. Its mere title could awaken associations which thrilled from pulse to pulse. It was still regarded by the men of ancient name and blood as the true head or heart of the empire, rather than the upstart Claudius or Domitius, who might wear the purple and wield the sword. To the men of words and phrases the emperor was still an accident,—the senate was an eternal fact,—at a time when rhetoric might make revolutions, though it could not regenerate society. To them it was still the symbol of liberty, at a time when liberty and Cæsar were regarded as two gladiators sword in hand, pitted against each other in mortal combat.<sup>1</sup> This venerable image of its ancient majesty was preserved to it by the proscriptions themselves by which it

*Its estimation lowered in the eye of the citizens.*

<sup>1</sup> Lucan, vii. 694.:

“Non jam Pompeii nomen popolare per orbem,  
Nec studium belli; sed par quod semper habemus  
Libertas et Cæsar erunt.”

suffered; for as often as a murdered Scribonius or Pompeius was replaced in the chairs of office by a Rubellius, a Lollius, or a Vitellius, the principle of its vitality was in fact invigorated by the infusion of new plebeian blood.<sup>1</sup>

As fast indeed as the tyrant's exigencies required the confiscation of the great estates of nobles, and the overthrow of great families, his caprice and favour were elevating new men from the inferior orders to succeed to their distinctions, and to rival them in their vast possessions. Nero never kept his money. All he robbed, all he extorted, was squandered as abruptly as it was acquired, and shrewd Roman money-makers were always waiting upon his necessities, and sweeping the properties of his victims into their stores for a small part of their value in specie. Of the vast sums amassed by the freedmen of Claudius and his successors some records have been preserved to us; but the freedmen were a class peculiarly obnoxious to remark, and it is probable that knights and senators were at the same time, and by similar compliances, raising fortunes not less enormous, who have escaped the designating finger of history. Though the grinding processes to which the colossal properties of the nobles were subjected must on the whole have broken down the average amount of their revenues far below the rate at which it figured under the republic and the first Cæsars, we must not suppose that the current set all in one direction, or that the age of Claudius and Nero was not also a period of great private accumulations. The wealth of individuals and of the upper ranks at Rome generally reached perhaps its greatest height at this culminating epoch.

*But general increase of wealth in the upper classes.*

Descending, however, from the high places of the Roman

<sup>1</sup> Champagny gives a list of the new consular families of the period of the Cæsars: "the Ælia, Annæa, Arruntia, Asinia, Cocceia, Hateria, Junia, Lollia, Memmia, Octavia, Plautia, Pomponia, Poppæa, Rubellia, Salvia, Sillia, Vipsania, Vitellia, Volusia. From henceforth we lose sight of many famous names of the republic; such as the Attilia, Fulvia, Horatia, Hortensia, Hostilia, Livia, Lucretia, Papiria, Porcia, Postumia, Veturia."

world, we find beneath them a commonalty suffering also a social revolution, undergoing a rapid transition, and presenting the elements of two rival classes, or even hostile camps, in the bosom of the city.

The commonalty divided into two classes.

The clients and retainers of the old nobility, whether freed or free born, still formed the pith and marrow of the commonwealth: still leaning their humble tenements against the great lords' mansions, still respecting them as their patrons and advisers, still attending their levees, and waiting for the daily compliment of the *sportula* at their doors, they regarded them as the real chiefs of the state, and held them equals of Cæsar himself. The death or exile of their august protector might strike them with surprise and indignation; but when they looked around and counted their numbers, they felt their own insignificance, and quailed beneath the blow in silence. They saw that there was growing up beside them a vast class of patronless proletaries, the scum of the streets and lanes, slaves, freedmen, foreigners, men of base trades and infamous employments, or of ruined fortunes, who, having none but Cæsar himself to depend on, threw the weight of their numbers in his scale, and earned his doles and entertainments by lavish caresses, and deeds corresponding to their promises.<sup>1</sup> These have been called the *lazzaroni* of ancient Rome: in idleness, indeed, and mendicancy they deserve the title; but they were the paupers of a world-wide empire, and the crumbs on which they fed fell from the tables of kings and princes. The wealth of millions of subjects was lavished on these mendicant masters. For days together, on the oft-recurring occasion of an imperial festival, valuables of all kinds were thrown pell-mell among them, rare and costly birds were lavished upon them by thousands, provisions of every

1. The clients of the old nobility.

2. The patronless proletaries: the *lazzaroni* of ancient Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 4. (a precious passage, as Champagny justly terms it, in which the historian marks this distinction of classes in the populace): "*Pars populi integra et magnis domibus annexa, clientes libertique damnatorum et exsulum: . . . plebs sordida et circo ac theatris sueta, simul deterrimi servorum, aut qui adesis bonis per dedecus Neronis alebantur.*"



kind, costly robes, gold and silver, pearls and jewels, pictures, slaves, and horses, and even tamed wild beasts: at last, in the progress of this wild profusion, ships, houses, and estates were bestowed by lottery on these waiters upon Cæsar's providence.<sup>1</sup> This extravagance was retained without relaxation throughout Nero's reign: had he paused in it for a moment the days of his power would have been few. The rumour that he was about to quit Rome for the East caused murmurs of discontent, and forced him to consult the gods, and pretend to be deterred by signs of their displeasure from carrying his design into effect.<sup>2</sup> When at last, as we shall see, he actually visited Greece, he left behind him a confidential minister, to keep the stream of his liberality flowing, at whatever cost and by whatever measures of spoliation. Absent or present, he flung to these pampered supporters a portion of every confiscated fortune; the emperor and his people hunted together, and the division of the prey was made apparently to the satisfaction of both equally. Capricious as were the blows he dealt around him, this class alone he took care never to offend, and even the charge of firing the city fell lightly on the ears of the almost houseless multitude, whose losses at least had been fully compensated by plunder. The clients of the condemned nobles were kept effectually in check by this hungry crowd, yelling over every carcass with the prospect of a feast. Nero, in the height of his tyranny and alarm, had no need to increase the number of his prætorians: the lazzaroni of Rome were a body-guard surrounding him in every public place, and watching the entrances and exits at his palace gates.

Such were the chief distinctions of class at this period among the Roman people, the so-called lords of mankind, and beyond them lay the great world of provincials, their subjects. But if these were subjects in name, they were now become in fact the

The provincials, or subjects of Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 11.; Dion, lxi. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 36.: "Deseruit inceptum. . . . Hæc atque talia plebi volentia fuere voluptatum cupidine," &c.

true Roman people; they alone retained real freedom of action within the limits of the empire; they were allowed to labour, and they enjoyed the bulk at least of the fruits of industry; they rarely saw the hateful presence of the emperor, and knew only by report the loathsome character of his courtiers and their orgies. And if sometimes the thunderbolt might fall among them, it struck only the highest eminences; the multitude was safe as it was innocent. The extortion of the proconsul in the province was not to be compared in wantonness or severity with the reckless pillage of the emperor in the capital, nearer home. The petulance of a proconsul's wife was hardly tolerated abroad, while at home the prince's worst atrocities were stimulated by female cupidity. The taxation of the subject, if heavier in some respects than that of the citizen, was at least tolerably regular: the extraordinary demands which Nero made towards the rebuilding of Rome were an exception to the routine of fiscal imposts. But, above all, the provincials had changed place with their masters in being now the armed force of the empire. The citizen had almost ceased to wield the sword. Even the prætorians were recruited from Italy, not from Rome herself; and among them thousands were doubtless foreign-born, the offscourings of the provinces, who had thrown themselves on the shores of Italy to seek their fortunes in a sphere abandoned by the indolence of their masters. The prætorian, like the proletariat of the city, was highly cherished by the emperor. He had his rights and privileges which raised him above every other military conscript. While the legionary served at ten asses a day for thirty or forty years exposed to the risk of war, fatigue, and climate, nor regained his liberty and safety till age had blanched his hair and stiffened his limbs, the prætorian lived quietly at Rome under the lax discipline of a stative camp; he enjoyed double pay, and claimed dismissal after sixteen years' service. He had his regular dole of corn, his occasional largess, his extraordinary donative whenever an opportunity had occurred to

The prætorians  
recruited in  
Italy.

prove his fidelity. Tiberius, on the fall of Sejanus, had given him 1000 ases; Claudius had paid for the purple with a sum of 150 millions of sesterces; Nero had followed these examples, and established them as the rule of the succession: on the overthrow of Piso's conspiracy he had requited his prætorians with 2000 sesterces apiece.<sup>1</sup> Thus caressed, the favoured cohorts of the guard became the firmest support of the prince their creature, and under the sway of military traditions, from which even they were not exempt, regarded their oath of allegiance with strict fidelity. This fidelity, indeed, they considered due to the emperor himself rather than to the senate and people, whom they equally despised: they were satisfied with the power of making the Cæsars, and as yet were far from conceiving in their minds the idea of unmaking them again.

But far different was the case with the legions in the provinces. The legionary was still less Roman than the prætorian. If to a great extent the recruits for the frontier camps were still levied from the class which possessed the nominal franchise of the city, yet these citizens were themselves, for the most part, new-enfranchised provincials: they had received Latin or Roman rights as a boon from the emperor, or perhaps purchased them for the sake of their fiscal immunities. Romans in blood or even Italians the legionaries no longer were. They were supported by ample levies of auxiliaries, avowedly of foreign extraction, generally transferred from their homes to a camp at a far distant station; Silures and Brigantes to the Danube; Tungri and Suevi to the borders of Wales; Iberians to the Euphrates, Numidians to the Rhine. Amidst the clang of dissonant languages that resounded through the camp the Latin was the least heard and understood.<sup>2</sup> Yet the word of

The legions recruited in the provinces.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 36., *Claud.* 10., *Ner.* 10.; *Tac. Ann.* xv. 72.

<sup>2</sup> The military inscriptions, such as those on the Roman walls in the north of Britain, from which chiefly these facts are elicited, are generally of a later date than that we are now considering. To this subject I shall have occasion to revert hereafter.

command was still Roman, and the chief officers were Romans also: the affections of this soldiery, long estranged from the emperor and the senate, were attached to the tribune and the legatus: and the murmurs of the nobles at home, which moved the sympathy of their kinsmen on the frontier, met a deep response in the devotion of these sons of the eagles to their accustomed leaders. The vast distance of the great camps of the empire from one another, and the frequent change of their officers, together with the motives of jealousy which the emperors nourished between them, helped to prevent these legions from joining in a common cause when disaffection menaced an outbreak in any particular quarter. They made some partial attempts to supplant the prætorians by carrying one of their own chiefs to power; but every endeavour of the kind had been hitherto baffled by the want of concert among them.

While, however, the emperor's power was thus firmly rooted in the capital, the blow which was at last to overwhelm him was slowly preparing in the provinces. The policy of the first Cæsars, which, in order to re-  
Independent position of the præconsuls.  
 press popular excitement at the seat of government, had renounced the maxim of the free state, that office should be held only for a limited term, had raised, in fact, a number of vice-Cæsars to the dependent thrones of the provincial governments. On the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates, and on a smaller scale at the centre of each proconsular jurisdiction, a Roman senator, generally of high birth and hereditary wealth, held the place of the imperator at the head of the armies, and of the whole civil and financial establishment. In this arduous position his hands were at least unfettered. He quitted Rome attended by friends of his own choosing; neither prince nor senate interfered with his appointments. No council at his seat of government, under pretence of assisting, had the power of controlling him. Throughout the extent of his province the word of the pro-

<sup>1</sup> Thus Tacitus remarks, *Hist.* i. 9.: "Longis spatiis discreti exercitus, quod saluberrimum est ad continendam fidem."

consul was law. The prætor's edict did not run beyond Rome and Italy. If in ordinary transactions between Romans the body of Roman law was held nominally in force, the master of the sword, so far removed from all supervision, was actually paramount, and the judicial officers, under his appointment and control, were simply interpreters of his will. Without a senate, without a public opinion, with hardly a tradition of government to check him, the ruler of Gaul and Syria was really more an emperor than the emperor himself. Dismissing from his mind, as much as possible, the thought of Cæsar's wrath, as of a capricious Nemesis which might at any moment be raised against him, he enjoyed the favours of fortune to the full, and compensated himself for the risks of his position by its substantial advantages.

It would be idle to suppose that the independence of the great captains in the provinces would be exercised without a large amount of deliberate or wanton tyranny.

Their government less tyrannical than that of the emperors at Rome.

But the murmurs of the provincials have been suppressed, their complaints have been buried in oblivion. That from time to time a vicious proconsul was still accused by his subjects and condemned by an equitable emperor, we learn from a few incidental notices: more than once a corner of the veil is raised, and we read, as in Palestine especially, of their violence and cruelty: nevertheless, on the whole, the balance of testimony seems to show that the provinces were governed more mildly than could have been anticipated, more mildly than the capital itself. The reason seems to be this, that while the excesses of the emperors at Rome were generally caused by personal fear, and often designed to stifle the first murmurs of discontent, in the provinces the governors had no such enemies to apprehend, while no severity towards their dependents could protect them against their only enemy, the emperor himself. The proconsuls, moreover, were always men of high character and standing, experienced in government, trained by discipline and accustomed to self-control; they were not mere striplings elevated by court favour, without preparation for

their arduous employment, without habits either of obedience or command. The history of the world presents us, perhaps, with no such succession of able captains and administrators, as the long series of the governors of Syria or Macedonia: we can only regret that our acquaintance with them is so imperfect, that the lines of their policy are often to be traced for the most part by conjecture and inference. Above all, however, it may be remarked that loyalty to the commonwealth was still the leading idea in the mind of the proconsul: he regarded himself strictly as the instrument of her behests; he acted with a single eye to her interest, barring only a certain amount of licensed profit for himself; while, as the sworn lieutenant of the emperor at home, he considered the commonwealth as centred in the imperial person.

By careful examination of the authorities, it has been found possible to make a complete list of the governors of the great province of Syria, the importance of which in Roman history has been so often indicated.<sup>1</sup> After the death of Germanicus in 772, his officers, while awaiting the pleasure of Tiberius, desired Sentius Saturninus to act as legatus of the emperor. This of

List of the proconsuls of Syria.

<sup>1</sup> See the elaborate and interesting dissertation of Ang. Zumpt (*Comm. Epigraph.* ii. 73-150.). I give here his list of proconsuls, with their dates:—

	B. C.	A. U.		A. D.	A. U.
Q. Didius - - -	- 30	724	P. Sulpicius Quirinius - -	6	769
M. Messala Corvinus - -	29	725	Q. Cæcilius Silanus - -	11	764
M. Tullius Cicero - -	28	726	Cn. Calpurnius Piso - -	17	770
A. Terentius Murena - -	28	726	L. Ælius Lamia - -	21	774
C. Sentius Saturninus - -	26	728	L. Pomponius Flaccus - -	32	785
M. Agrippa - - -	23	731	L. Vitellius - - -	35	788
M. Titius - - -	13	741	P. Petronius - - -	39	792
C. Sentius Saturninus - -	9	745	C. Vibius Marsus - -	42	795
P. Quintilius Varus - -	6	748	C. Cassius Longinus - -	45	798
P. Sulpicius Quirinius - -	4	750	C. Ummidius Quadratus - -	50	803
M. Lollius - - -	- 1	753	Domitius Corbulo - -	61	814
	A. D.		C. Cestius Gallus - -	62	816
C. Marcius Censorinus - -	3	756	C. Licinius Mucianus - -	66	819
L. Volusius Saturninus - -	4	757			

course did not constitute an appointment to the proconsulship which Piso had vacated, nor do we hear that Tiberius regarded it as a recommendation. But he was unwilling perhaps to offend a powerful soldiery by openly repudiating their choice, or he shrank from conferring upon any one the full powers of the Syrian prefecture. Accordingly the next governor, *Ælius Lamia*, seems to have been retained at home, while the province was administered for several years by the chiefs of the four legions quartered within it. *Lamia* was succeeded by *Pomponius Flaccus*, who once more united the province under a single ruler, and died in the year 786. Upon this vacancy the carelessness, or more probably the jealousy, of the emperor allowed the province to remain for two years without a superior governor. Tiberius pretended indeed that no senator of sufficient authority would quit the dissipations of the capital for the vice-regal splendours of the East.<sup>1</sup> The excuse was too transparent to impose on any one. But the urgency of affairs on the oft-disturbed frontier compelled him at last to supply the vacancy, and *L. Vitellius*, to whom Syria was assigned in 788, seems to have been one of the ablest as well as the noblest of the senatorial order. This proconsul continued to govern through the earlier years of *Caius*, till he gave offence by hesitating to enforce the worship of the emperor upon the Jews. Certainly *Vitellius*, the worshipper himself of *Caius*, and the devoted flatterer of *Messalina*, had no scruples of pride or religion: but, good soldier and administrator as he was, he shrank from a wanton insult which would infallibly lead to a revolt.<sup>2</sup> *Petronius*, who succeeded him, allowed the affair to linger under various excuses, and the last letter, requiring him to proceed in its execution without further delay, reached him fortunately at the same moment with the news of the emperor's death. *Petronius* was apparently an old familiar of *Claudius*, and was permitted to retain the government for some years under

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 27.; Zumpt, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus says of him, vi. 32.: "Regendis provinciis prisca virtute egisse." For his recall by *Caius*, see Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 8. 2. A. U. 793.

the new Cæsar.<sup>1</sup> He was followed by Vibius Marsus, one of the few friends of Germanicus who had preserved, after his patron's death, the favour of Tiberius, and had been suffered to pass three years in the government of Africa.<sup>2</sup> The next in succession, C. Cassius Longinus, is a splendid example of the character and position which were held to qualify for this exalted sovereignty. This man was descended from the family of the Liberator, who was hardly less distinguished for his victories over the Parthians than for his defence of Roman freedom. He had obtained the consulship under Tiberius, but his renown as the chief of a sect among the jurists of his age recommended him, under Claudius, to the still higher honours of the proconsulate. For five years Syria was ruled by Cassius: after his retirement from the province he lost his sight, but his reputation sufficed of itself to excite the jealousy of Nero, who banished him to Sardinia in the year 818.<sup>3</sup> From 803 to 814 the government was held by Ummidius Quadratus, the first of the series of Syrian proconsuls that died in office. He owed his long tenure to the fact that Anteius, designed by Nero for his successor, was an object of suspicion at court as a friend of Agrippina.<sup>4</sup>

During the last two proconsulates the prefecture of Syria had acquired its greatest extension. On the death of Herod Agrippa in 797, his kingdom of Judea had been definitively annexed to the empire, and was subjected, as once before, to an imperial procurator, who, while he derived his fiscal and civil authority directly from the emperor, and acted in a manner as his viceroy, was nevertheless placed under the military control of the proconsul.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This Petronius, called Publius by Josephus and Philo, seems to be the same described by Seneca in his satire on the death of Claudius, as "vetus convictor ejus," and "homo Claudiana lingua disertus." He must have held the government of Syria till 42. Zumpt, p. 136., from Eckhel, iii. 280.

<sup>2</sup> Eckhel, iv. 147., in Zumpt, l. c.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 7.: *Suet. Ner.* 37. He was eventually recalled from exile by Vespasian: Pompon. *de Orig. Juris* in *Dig.* i. 2. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Zumpt on Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 22., xvi. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* xii. 60.: "Sepius audita vox principis (Claudii), parem vim



Under court protection some of the Judean procurators, especially the infamous Felix, the brother of Pallas, and his partner in the favour of Claudius, had indulged in every excess, till the spirit of revolt already roused by the threats of Caius broke out in fierce but desultory acts of violence. These indeed had been repressed with the sternness of Rome, not unmingled with some features of barbarity peculiar to the East.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the government had resented the tyranny of its officers, which had caused this dangerous insubordination, and Quadratus had himself condemned from his tribunal the indiscretion of the procurator Cumanus.<sup>2</sup> While, however, the authority of the Syrian proconsul was thus extended over the region of Palestine in the south, a portion of his northern dependencies was taken from him, and erected for a time into a separate prefecture. In the year 808 the brave Domitius Corbulo, recalled from his German command, was deputed to maintain the majesty of the empire in the face of the Parthians, and defend Armenia from the intrigues or violence with which they continued to menace it. The forces of Rome in the East were now divided between Quadratus and Corbulo. To the proconsul of Syria were left two legions with their auxiliaries, to the new commander were assigned the other two, while the frontier tributaries were ordered to serve in either camp, as the policy of the empire should require.<sup>3</sup> While such was the distribution of the

*rerum habendam a procuratoribus suis judicatarum ac si ipse statuisset.*" The powers of the procurator were thus extended from matters of revenue to justice and administration. He was checked, however, by the presence of a legatus with an armed force, representing the proconsul, in his district. The general character of the Judean procurators is described from a single instance by Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 9.: "Claudius, defunctis regibus aut ad modicum redactis, Judæam provinciam equitibus Rom. aut libertis permisit, e quibus Antonius Felix per omnem sævitiam ac libidinem jus regum servili ingenio exercuit."

<sup>1</sup> The horrid death by crucifixion, which in the West was the punishment of slaves only, was inflicted without scruple on the rebellious Jews.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xx. 6. 8.; Tac. *Ann.* xii. 54., from which passage it appears that the proconsul of Syria was supreme over the imperial procurator in Judea.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 8.: "Domitium Corbulonem retinendæ Armeniæ præpo-

troops, the territory itself was divided by the line of the Taurus: Cappadocia, together with Galatia, was intrusted to Corbulo, and constituted a separate province.

*Campaigns of  
Corbulo.*

Here he raised the levies he required to replace the lazy veterans who had vitiated the Syrian legions; and here, having further strengthened himself from the German camps, this stern reviver of discipline prepared his men, amidst the rocks and snows, to penetrate the fastnesses of Armenia, and dislodge the Parthians from the gorges of Ararat and Elbrouz.<sup>1</sup> Tiridates, the Parthian pretender to the throne of Armenia, in vain opposed him with arms and treachery. The Romans advanced to the walls of Artaxata, which they stormed and burnt; an exploit, the glory of which was usurped by Nero himself, the senate voting supplications in his honour, and consecrating day after day to the celebration of his victory, till Cassius ventured to demand a limit to such ruinous profusion.<sup>2</sup> The war how-

*A. D. 58.  
A. U. 811.*

ever was still prolonged through a second and a third campaign: the Hyrcanians on the banks of the Caspian and Aral,—so far-reaching was the machinery put in motion by Corbulo,—were encouraged to divert the Parthians from assisting Tiridates; and communications were held with them by the route of the Red Sea and the deserts of Beloochistan. At last the Armenian Tigranes, long retained in custody at Rome, was placed by the proconsul on the throne of his ancestors.<sup>3</sup> Some portions of his patrimony, however, were now attached to the sovereignties of Pontus and Cappadocia; a Roman force was left in garrison at Tigranocerta,

suerat . . . Copiæ Orientis ita dividuntur . . . Socii reges, prout bello conduceret, parere jussi: sed studia eorum in Corbulonem promptiora erant."

<sup>1</sup> The rigours of winter in this elevated and inclement region, the land of Kars and Erzeroum, which have acquired such notoriety in our own day, are painted with terrible force by Tacitus. *Ann.* xiii. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiii. 41: "C. Cassius . . . disseruit . . . oportere dividi sacros et negotiosos dies, quæ divina colerent et humana non impedirent."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 25, 26.: "Pars Armenia, ut cique finitima, Pharasmani Polemonique, et Aristobulo atque Antiocho, parere jussæ."

to support his precarious power; and on the death of Quadratus, Corbulo, having achieved the most brilliant successes in the East of any Roman since Pompeius, claimed the whole province of Syria, and the entire administration of affairs on the Parthian frontier, as his legitimate reward.<sup>1</sup>

The union of these wide regions once more under a single ruler, so contrary, as it would appear, to the emperor's natural policy, was extorted perhaps from the fears of Nero, not indeed by actual threats, but by the formidable attitude of his general. An emperor, still a youth, who had seen no service himself, and had only caught at the shadows of military renown cast on him by his lieutenants, may have felt misgivings at the greatness of the real chiefs of his legions. It was from this jealousy, perhaps, that the career of conquest in Britain was so suddenly checked after the victory of Suetonius. The position indeed of Corbulo, the successor of Agrippa and Germanicus, might seem beyond the emperor's reach. It could only be balanced by creating similar positions in other quarters, and the empire was, in fact, at this moment virtually divided among three or four great commanders, any one of whom was leader of more numerous forces than could be mustered to oppose him at the seat of government. Nero was well aware of his danger; but he had not the courage to insist, on this occasion, on the division of Syria into two prefectures. He took, as we shall see, a baser precaution, and already perhaps contemplated the assassination of the lieutenant whom he dared not control. It was from Corbulo himself that the proposal came for at least a temporary division. That gallant general, a man of antique devotion to military principles, had no views of personal aggrandisement. When the Parthians, again collecting their forces, made a simultaneous attack on both Armenia and Syria, Corbulo declared that the double war required the presence of two chiefs of equal authority. He

The position of Corbulo becomes formidable to Nero.

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<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 26.: "Corbulo in Syriam absecessit, morte Unamidii legati vacuum et sibi permissam."

desired that the province beyond the Taurus should again be made a separate government.<sup>1</sup> Assuming in person the defence of the Syrian frontier with three legions, he transferred Cappadocia and Galatia, with an equal force, to Cæsenius Pætus, who repaid his generosity by reflecting on the presumed slowness of his operations.<sup>2</sup> But Pætus was as incapable as he was vain. Having advanced into Armenia, he was shut up in one of its cities with two legions, by a superior force, constrained to implore aid from Corbulo, and at last, when the distance and difficulty of the way precluded the possibility of succour, to capitulate ignominiously. Vologesus, king of Parthia, refrained from proceeding to extremities, and treating the humbled foe as his ancestor had treated Crassus.<sup>3</sup> He pretended to desire only a fair arrangement of the points in dispute between the rival empires; and Pætus, having promised that pending this settlement the legions should be withdrawn from Armenia, was suffered, though not without previous indignities, to march out of his captured stronghold, and retire in haste within the frontiers.<sup>4</sup> Arrived there, Corbulo treated him with scornful forbearance; but the emperor recalled him from his post, and the combined forces of the province were once more entrusted to the only man capable of retrieving the disaster.<sup>5</sup> Corbulo penetrated

A. D. 62.  
A. U. 813.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 3. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 6.: "Pætus . . . . despiciēbat gesta, nihil cedis aut prædæ . . . . dictitans." But Tacitus himself had said of Corbulo, "bellum habere quam gerere malebat."

<sup>3</sup> A terrible rumour reached Rome that the legions had been made to pass under the yoke. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 15. Suetonius speaks of it as a fact, I have no doubt erroneously. *Ner.* 89.

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 16-18. The triumphal arch, already decreed during the progress of these events to Nero, was completed and dedicated in the face of this military disaster.

<sup>5</sup> The civil command in Syria was now committed to Cincius or Cestius Gallus (Zumpt, p. 141.), but the combined forces of the Eastern provinces were placed under Corbulo, and he received authority, like that given to Pompeius by the Gabinian law, over all officers, civil and military, throughout the East. Thus we find that he summoned to his standard cohorts from Illyricum and Egypt. Tac. *Ann.* xv. 25, 26.

into the heart of Armenia by the road which Lucullus had formerly opened; but the enemy declined to encounter him. Even on the spot of his ally's recent triumphs, Tiridates bowed to the demands of the proconsul, and consented to lay his diadem at the feet of the emperor's image, and go to Rome to receive it back from his hand.<sup>1</sup> The claims of the puppet Tigranes were eventually set aside, and while Tiridates did homage for his kingdom to Nero, he was suffered to place himself really under the protection of Vologesus.

In the year 816 (A. D. 63), the period of these transactions, Nero, we are told, was preparing to visit the East in person.

Probable object  
of Nero's pro-  
posed visit to  
the East.

A. D. 63.  
A. U. 816.

Some indeed asserted that his object was only to behold the wonders of Egypt;<sup>2</sup> and the interest of the citizens was just then directed towards that mysterious region by the discoveries of an exploring party, which had recently ascended the Nile 900 miles above Syene.<sup>3</sup> Others believed that he had no intention of proceeding beyond Greece; but it seems probable that his views were really more extensive, and that he contemplated throwing himself into the quarters of the Syrian legions, and checking by his presence the ambition of the proconsul, perhaps seizing an opportunity to overthrow him. But, whatever Nero's project may have been, it was frustrated as we have seen, by the occurrence of the fire at Rome. The affairs of the next three years have been already

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 29, 30.: "At nunc versos casus: iturum Tiridatem ostentui gentibus, quanto minus quam captivum!"

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xv. 36.: "Omissa in præsens Achaia, . . . . provincias Orientis, maxime Ægyptum, secretis imaginationibus agitans."

<sup>3</sup> For a brief notice of this interesting expedition, see Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* vi. 35., also Seneca, *Nat. Quæst.* vi. 8., who had conversed with some of the party. The curiosity of the Romans is reflected in the long episode about the Nile in the tenth book of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, where the previous attempts to reach its source are enumerated:

"Quæ tibi noscendi Nilum, Romane, cupido est,  
Et Phariis Persisque fuit, Macetumque tyrannis:  
Nullaque non ætas voluit conferre futuris  
Notitiam; sed vincit adhuc natura latendi," &c.

related: the conspiracies which were concerted against the emperor at home, his redoubled efforts to secure the favour of the populace, and his cruel precaution of destroying every man of eminence who might become the centre of fresh machinations to his prejudice. In the year 819, he at last found leisure to execute his scheme of travel, so far, at least, as to visit Greece; where he presented himself at the public spectacles, and gratified his passion for dancing and singing, before promiscuous assemblages, with still less reserve than at home. All the states which held musical contests had hastened, even before his arrival, to humour him with the offer of their prizes, and Nero had received their envoys with the highest honours, and invited them to his table. When one of them begged him to give a specimen of his singing, and his skill was rapturously applauded, he declared that the Greeks alone had ears, and alone deserved the honour of hearing him.<sup>1</sup>

A. D. 66.  
A. U. 819.

Nero remained in Greece to the beginning of the year 821. He was attended by courtiers and court-followers of all descriptions, and many, it was affirmed, of the chief nobility were invited to accompany him, that he might slay them more securely at a distance from the city. However this may be, the ministers of his luxury and panders to his vices formed the most conspicuous portion of his escort; for he seems to have prosecuted his enormities among the despised Greeks more shamelessly than ever.<sup>2</sup> The great ambition of the Emperor, now following in the track of Mummius, Flaminius, Agrippa, and Augustus, was to gain the distinction of a Periodoniceus, or victor in the whole circle of the

Nero in Greece:  
his triumphs at  
the Grecian  
games.

A. D. 67.  
A. U. 820.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 22

<sup>2</sup> This absence from Rome may, indeed, have allowed greater licence to exaggeration in our accounts; but generally the Romans indulged their vices more freely abroad. As regards the nuptials of Nero with Sporus under the name of Sabina, it may be worth while to observe that it was in Greece, not in Rome, that they were solemnized. Dion, *lxiil.* 13. Nevertheless, the story of Nero and Pythagoras in Tacitus (*Ann.* xv. 37.) admits of no such qualification.

Games; for in compliment to him, the contests which recurred in successive years at Olympia, Nemea, Delphi, and Corinth were all to be enacted during his residence in the country.<sup>1</sup> Nor was this the only irregularity admitted. At Olympia he demanded a musical contest, such as had never been practised there before; at the Isthmus he contended in tragedy and comedy, which also was contrary to the local usage.<sup>2</sup> The exertions of Nero were not confined to playing, singing, and acting. He presented himself also as a charioteer, nor was he ashamed to receive the prize even when he had fallen with car and horses to the ground. Wherever he went he challenged the most famous artists to contend with him, and extorted every prize from every competitor. A Roman consular enacted the part of herald, and proclaimed in the astonished ears of Greece, *Nero the Emperor is Victor, and he crowns the People of Rome, and the World which is his own.*<sup>3</sup>

The flattery of the Greeks deserved substantial acknowledgment, and Nero was prepared to make a sacrifice for the purpose. He negotiated an exchange of provinces with the senate, resigning the imperial prison-house of Sardinia, and receiving in its place the prefecture of Achaia. He then proclaimed, in the forum at Corinth, the freedom and immunity of the province, while he awarded to his judges the honour of Roman citizenship, together with large presents in money.<sup>4</sup> Another project

Nero proclaims  
the freedom of  
Greece.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 23.; Dion, lxiil. 10., where see Reimar's note. This Olympiad of confusion was afterwards omitted from the list in consequence. Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* iv. 24. Pausan. x. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *Ner.* 9.

<sup>3</sup> Dion, lxiil. 14.: στεφανοῖ τὸν τε τῶν Ῥωμαίων δῆμον καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν οἰκονομίην.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Flaminius*, 12., who might have been a witness . . . Νέρων καὶ ἐμῶς ἐν Κορίνθῳ . . . says that he made this announcement from the rostrum in the agora. Suetonius, *Ner.* 24., with the zeal of the historians to blacken Nero's character as a Roman, declares that he spoke from the stadium itself. "Quæ beneficia e medio stadio, Isthmiorum die, sua ipse voce pronuntiavit." Dion, lxiil. 11., does not mention the place.

ascribed to him, magnificent and useful in itself, may have had no other object in his mind than to render him famous in history; in almost any other human being we should look for some worthier motive for it. This was the cutting of the Isthmus of Corinth, a measure His project for cutting through the Isthmus. often before proposed and attempted, but never achieved.<sup>1</sup> The work was commenced: convicts were condemned to labour upon it, and among them the learned Stoic Musonius Rufus, removed from Gyarus, whither he had been banished as an accomplice in Piso's conspiracy, was seen by another philosopher handling the spade and pick-axe. But men of science from Egypt assured the emperor that, if the work were effected, the waters of the Corinthian gulf, being higher than the Saronic, would submerge the island of Ægina, and after Nero's departure the design was promptly abandoned.<sup>2</sup> The Romans regarded its frustration as a judgment perhaps on his unnatural pride. In commencing the work with a sacrifice, it had been remarked, as an instance of the hatred he bore the senate, that he had prayed simply that it might turn out well *for the Emperor and the People of Rome.*<sup>3</sup>

It is not impossible, however, that there may have been a politic motive in this visit to Greece, such as I have formerly suggested for the expedition of Caius into Gaul. Fresh disturbances had broken out in Judea: the cruelties of Gessius Florus had excited a sedition, which Cestius Gallus advanced to Jerusalem from Antioch to repress. But here he had

A political motive may be assigned for this visit to Greece.

<sup>1</sup> On these futile attempts see Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* iv. 4. Lucan also alludes to this as one of the common visions of ambition and enterprize. *Phars.* vi. 60.:

"Tot potuere manus adjungere Seston Abydo, . . .

Et ratibus longæ flexus donare Maleæ."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 19.; Dion, *lxiil.* 16.; Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* iv. 24., v. 19. I believe there is no foundation for the idea of the one sea being higher than the other. A similar notion respecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean has prevailed to much later times. The late French Survey (1853) makes, I am told, the former one metre higher than the latter.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 37.: "Dissimulata senatus mentione."



encountered the people in arms, and had been suddenly overpowered and slain. The Jews were elated with success and hopeless of pardon; it was soon evident that the great war which must decide the fate of their country, and with it of the Roman empire of the East, so often threatened, so long delayed, had commenced. But Corbulo was almost on the spot; his legions were mighty, his name still mightier; such forces under such a leader might be trusted to do the work of Rome thoroughly in any quarter. Nevertheless the jealousy of the wretched prince prevailed over all concern for the interests of his country.<sup>1</sup> He trembled at the increase of influence this new war might bring to his formidable proconsul. This was the moment he chose for repairing in person to the threshold of his province, and summoning the man he feared to attend upon him in Greece. At the same time he ordered Vespasianus, who had already distinguished himself in the British war, but had acquired as yet no dangerous pre-eminence, to take command of the forces destined for Palestine. Corbulo must have known that he was superseded: he must have felt his summons as a disgrace; he must have apprehended personal danger. Yet had he known that every step he took westward was bringing him straight to his doom, such was his fidelity as a soldier that he would have obeyed without hesitation. No sooner had he arrived at Cenchræ, the port of Corinth, than he was met by emissaries from Nero bearing him the order to dispatch himself. Without murmur or remonstrance, he plunged a sword into his heart, exclaiming as he struck the blow, *Rightly served!*

<sup>1</sup> The remark of Tiridates to Nero at Rome, "What a good slave you have in Corbulo," Dion, lxiil. 6.; was meant, I suppose, to excite his apprehensions of a man who with such power condescended to servitude.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lxiil. 17.: *παύειν ἐλεγεν, ἀξιος*. We have now lost the guidance of Tacitus, and are less certain of our dates. Dion places this event in 820. The appointment of Vespasian was certainly towards the end of 819 (Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iii. 4. 2.), and Zumpt thinks that Corbulo had fallen before this appointment was made. On the whole I do not see reason to reject the date in Dion

Nor was the gallant Corbulo the tyrant's only victim. At the same time he summoned two brothers, Rufus and Proculus, of the great Scribonian house, who commanded in the two Germanies, to meet him in Greece, under pretence of conferring with them on state affairs. The summons was in fact a recall, and the pretence which accompanied it could hardly have deceived them; yet they too obeyed with the same alacrity as Corbulo, and fell, perhaps not unwittingly, into the same snare. Some specific charges were laid against them; but no opportunity was given them of meeting them, nor were they allowed to see the emperor. They killed themselves in despair.<sup>1</sup>

Assassination  
of two other  
proconsuls.

Although during his sojourn in Greece, Nero traversed the province in every direction, it was observed that he abstained from visiting either Athens or Sparta. With respect to the city of Lycourgius it was affirmed merely that he kept aloof from it lest the austerity of its usages should prove irksome to him; but he dared not enter the abode of the Erinnyes, from dread of their vengeance on his crimes.<sup>2</sup> Another account said that he refrained from initiation into the mysteries of Eleusis, which was denied, under direst imprecations, to the impious and impure.<sup>3</sup> Of these awful legends of Grecian antiquity but a faint and confused echo resounded in Italy. To the Latin or the Sabine it little mattered whether the murderer shrank from Athens or Eleusis, whether it was the avenging Furies or the pure goddess of the mysteries before whom he trembled to appear. *Give but freedom to the people, they said, to declare what they really think, and who so base as to hesitate between the lots of Seneca and Nero; Nero who more than once deserved the*

Nero shrinks  
from present-  
ing himself at  
Athens, and  
from initiation  
into the myste-  
ries at Eleusis.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, l. c.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lxiil. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 34. There seems to be a confusion between the two accounts, and that of Suetonius appears the more worthy of belief. The furies were already present to the murderer of Agrippina: "*Sæpe confessus exagitari se ma-terna specie, verberibusque Furiarum ac tædis ardentibus.*"

The indignation of the Romans against him expressed by Juvenal.

sack, the serpent, and the ape, the instruments of death for parricide. True, Orestes by divine command had slain his mother; but he at least avenged the death of a father—Nero had assisted at the slaughter of Claudius: Orestes spared at least his wife and sister—Nero had murdered both: Orestes had not poisoned a kinsman—Nero had mingled aconite for many: above all, Orestes had never sung upon the stage, nor chanted, like Nero, the fall of Ilium. This it seems was the crown and climax of his crimes, the last and worst of the indignities he heaped on Rome; this was the deed for which the sword of the avenger was most fitly drawn.<sup>1</sup> For such, exclaims Juvenal, forsooth, were the acts, such were the arts of our high-born prince, proud to degrade himself on a foreign stage, and earn the paltry chaplets of the Grecian games. Let him lay before the image of Domitius the mantle of Thyestes, the mask of Antigone or Melanippe; let him hang his votive lyre on the marble statue of Augustus."

Beneath this veil of rhetoric lies a truth which it is the province of history to remark. The Romans, from age to

<sup>1</sup> Juvenal, viii. 211. foll.:

"Libera si dentur populo suffragia, &c. . . .  
Troica non scripsit."

He composed his tragedy, *Τροίας ἄλωσις*, before; he took occasion to sing it at the burning of Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Juvenal, l. c. 224.:

"Hæc opera atque hæc sunt generosi Principis artes,  
Gaudentis sædo peregrina ad pulpita socco  
Prostitui, Graæque apium meruisse coronæ.  
Majorum effigies habeant insignia vœcis, . . .  
Et de marmoreo citharam suspende colosso."

Some critics have been tempted to interpret the last line of the Colossus of Nero himself, which stood in the entrance of his golden house, said to have been 110 or 120 feet in height. Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xxxiv. 18.) gives us to understand that this statue was of marble, while such colossal figures were generally cast in bronze. "Ea statua indicavit interisse æris fundendi scientiam." But it seems safer to refer it to the statement of Suetonius (*Ner.* 12.): "citharam a judicibus ad se delatam adoravit, ferrique ad Augusti statuam jussit."

age, viewed their own times in a very different light from that in which they have appeared to posterity. The notion of Juvenal that the acting and singing of Nero were in fact his most flagrant enormities was felt no doubt, even in his own day, as a wild exaggeration; nevertheless it points to the principle, then still in vigour, of the practical religion of antiquity, the principle of faith in its social traditions. With cruelty and oppression the Romans were so familiar that Nero's atrocities in this respect, so harrowing to our feelings, made little impression upon them; but his desecration of their national manners, his abandonment of the *mos majorum*, the usage of his ancestors, startled them like impiety or sacrilege. They were not aware how far they had really drifted from the habits of antiquity, how much of foreign poison they had admitted into their veins. Theoretically they still held in sanctimonious horror the customs of the stranger; foreign usages might be innocent, nay, laudable, in their own place, but to introduce them into Rome was a monstrous sin, a sin, not against the gods in whom they no longer believed, but against the Nation, in which they believed more intensely perhaps than ever. The State or Nation was itself gradually assuming in their eyes the personality of a distinct divinity, in which all other divinities were absorbed: the Hellenism which Nero vaunted was apostasy from the goddess Roma.

Why they regarded his acting and singing as the climax of his enormities.

The Greeks on the other hand would regard, we may suppose, with more indulgence the caprices of their imperial visitor; they were accustomed to flatter, and in this instance there was some excuse for flattering a humour so flattering to themselves. The miserable vices he paraded before them were too like their own, at least in their period of corruption, to elicit strong moral reprobation. Nevertheless, if we may credit our accounts, he found more effectual means of disgusting them. The imperial tyranny was always pursued, as by its shadow, by profuse and fatal expenditure. It seemed unable to move without the attendance of a crowd of harpies, ever demand-

Nero plunders Greece of her monuments of art.

ing their prey with maw insatiable. Every day required fresh plunder; every day proscriptions and confiscations revealed the prince's necessities, and if these for a moment slackened for want of victims, his hands were laid on the monuments of art, on every object on which money could be raised throughout the devoted land. The temples as well as the dwellings and the forums of Greece were ransacked again for the costliest and most cherished treasures, to be sold by auction to the highest bidder, or redeemed at exorbitant prices by their unhappy owners. Greece was powerless to resist, and her murmurs were drowned in the acclamations of the hired applauders; but she felt her wrongs deeply, and the pretended boon of freedom, accompanied by a precarious immunity, was regarded perhaps as an insult rather than a favour.<sup>1</sup>

Rome at least, it might be hoped, would breathe again during the absence of her hateful tormenter. But this, we are assured, was as far from her as ever. Her condition had become even more miserable. The emperor had given the government of Italy to a freedman named Helius, and this minion exercised cruelty and rapine at his own caprice, not even deigning to ask the prince's pleasure beforehand on the executions and confiscations he commanded.<sup>2</sup> Yet Helius was not unfaithful to his master's interests. On the first symptoms of danger from discontent in the city or the provinces, for such symptoms began at last to threaten, he urged him to hasten back to the seat of government, and it was Nero's obstinacy alone that postponed his return for some months. *You admonish me, you entreat me*, replied the infatuated wretch, *to present myself again at Rome; nay, but you should rather dissuade me from returning, until I have reaped my full harvest of laurels.* This harvest was not yet gathered in, and the cries

Helius governs  
Rome during  
Nero's absence.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lxi. 11.; Suet. *Ner.* 32. Nero, it will be remembered, had begun a systematic robbery of Greece, and extended it to Asia, before this time. See Tac. *Ann.* xvi. 23., and above, ch. liii.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 23.; Dion, lxi. 12.

of the keeper of the city, already trembling for the fate of the empire, were disregarded, while there yet remained a stadium to be trodden, or a chaplet to be won in Greece. At the commencement, however, of the year 821 the aspect of affairs had become still more serious.<sup>1</sup> Plots for the subversion of the government were believed to be rife in the armies of the West. The heads of administration at Rome knew not whom of their officers in Gaul or Spain to trust. Deep gloom had settled down on the upper classes in the capital; the temper of the populace itself, so long the stay of Nero's tyranny, was uncertain. Helius again urged him to hasten his return. He crossed over to Greece to confer with him in person. He repeated his instances with increasing fervour. At last when there seemed no more of fame or booty to be wrung from Greece, Nero deigned to take ship, though the season of navigation had not yet commenced, and urged his prow through stormy seas to the haven of Puteoli.<sup>2</sup>

At Delphi he had consulted the oracle about his future fortunes, and had been warned, we are told, against *the seventy-third year*, a response which seemed to the youth of thirty to portend a great length of days, but was found in the sequel to have another and a fatal signification.<sup>3</sup> Fortified, however, by this delusion, he had returned to Italy with little anxiety, and when some of the precious objects that followed in his train were lost by shipwreck, he vaunted in the plenitude of his self-assurance that the fishes themselves would restore them. After losing and again recovering both Britain and Armenia, his

Nero's return  
to Italy, and  
triumphal en-  
try into Roma.

<sup>1</sup> We must place at this period the futile conspiracy of Vinicius at Beneventum, which is cursorily mentioned by Suetonius (*Ner.* 36.), but by no other author.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lxxiii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 40. The seventy-third year referred, it seems, to the age of his successor Galba. The story we may suppose was invented to fit the event. The oracle at Delphi had fallen into disrepute, but was still consulted by the vain and frivolous. It is not improbable that Nero insisted on receiving a response. Comp. the story of Appius in Lucan, v. 122. foll., recounted in chapter xvii.

confidence in his good fortune had become, it is said, unbounded. It was at Naples, he remembered, that he had commenced his long course of artistic victories. Now arrived at the height of his glory, he determined to celebrate his successes by a triumphal entry into the Campanian capital, with a team of milk-white horses. The walls were broken down to admit the chariot of the Hieronicus, and the same extravagance was repeated when he entered Antium, his native place, and the Albanum, his favourite residence, and once more, when he presented himself before Rome.<sup>1</sup> He drove in pomp through the city, in the chariot in which Augustus had triumphed, with the flutist Diodorus by his side arrayed in a purple robe, and a mantle blazing with golden stars, wearing on his head the Olympian coronal, and waving the Pythian in his hand. He was preceded by a long train of attendants bearing aloft his other chaplets and the titles of all his victories: he was followed by his five thousand Augustani, with loud and measured acclamations, as the soldiers who shared his glory. The procession passed through the Circus, some arches of which were demolished to admit it, and thence to the Velabrum and the forum, skirting the base of the Palatine to the Porta Mugionis, the chief ascent to the hill and temple of Apollo on its summit. The sacrifice of victims, the flinging of odours, and every other accompaniment of a military triumph, were duly observed in this mock solemnity: the statues of the emperor were decked with crowns and lyres; the citizens hailed their hero with the titles of Nero-Apollo and Nero-Hercules, invoking his *divine voice*, and pronouncing all who heard it blessed. The affair was concluded by the striking of medals, on which Nero was represented, to the shame and horror of all genuine patriots, in the garb of a flute-player.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 25. Brotier cites the statement of Vitruvius, ix. præf.: "No bilibus athleticis qui Olympia, Pythia, Isthmia, Nemea vicissent, Græcorum majores ita magnos honores constituerunt, uti . . . cum revertuntur in suas civitates cum victoria, triumphantes quadrigis in moenia et in patrias invehantur"

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lxxiii. 20.; Suet. *Ner.* 25.

But the hour of retribution was at hand. Notwithstanding the servile flattery of the senate, and the triumphs and supplications it had decreed, Nero felt uneasy at the murmurs no longer stifled, and the undissembled gloom, which now surrounded him in his capital, and withdrew himself from Rome to the freer air of Campania. Meanwhile the discontent repressed in the city was finding vent in the provinces, and the camps, thronged as they were with kinsmen of the mocked and injured senators, were brooding over projects of revenge. Among the most distinguished of the officers who at this time held commands and enjoyed the confidence of their soldiers, was **Servius Sulpicius Galba**, who for several years had governed the Hither Spain. Connected with the first families of Rome, and descended from many heroes of the camp and forum, this man stood high in public regard, and in the admiration of the emperors themselves, for his courage, his skill, and his austerity. He had deserved well of Caius for the vigour with which, at a critical moment, he drew up the reins of discipline in the Rhenish camps; still better of Claudius for refusing the offer of his own soldiers to raise him to empire on Caius's death. He had held command in Aquitania, and was for two years proconsul of Africa: he had received the triumphal ornaments, and been admitted to the priestly colleges of the Titii, the Quindecimvirs, and the Augustales. Full of years and honours, he had retired from public employment through the first half of Nero's principate, till summoned to preside over the Tarraconensis. He exercised his powers with vigilance and a harshness which perhaps was salutary, until the emperor's growing jealousy warned him to shroud his reputation under the veil of indolence or even neglect, and thus he escaped the fate of Corbulo and lived to avenge it.<sup>1</sup> *Galba was in his seventy-third year.* In his childhood he had been brought,

Discontent in the provinces.

Character and position of Servius Sulpicius Galba, commander in Spain.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Galb.* 9. His government in Spain extended over eight years, from 814 to 821. Comp. Plutarch. *Galb.* 4.



it was reported, with others of the young nobility, to salute the aged Augustus; and the emperor, taking him playfully by the cheek, had said, *And thou too, child, shalt one day taste our empire.*<sup>1</sup> Tiberius, it was added, had learned from the diviner, the splendid destiny that awaited his old age, but had remarked complacently, that to himself it could not matter.<sup>2</sup> Nero, it seems, whom these prognostications touched more nearly, either forgot, or was lulled to false security about them.

Early in the winter of 821, while Nero was still absent in Greece, Galba received overtures from C. Julius Vindex,

Overtures for a  
revolt made to  
him by Vindex  
in Gaul.

prefect of the Farther Gaul, for a simultaneous rising. Vindex was himself a Gallo-Roman scion of a royal house in Aquitania, adopted into the imperial gens; but while he imbibed the pride of a Roman, he retained the impetuous spirit of his ancestors; and the enormities of Nero, aggravated no doubt in his esteem by his exactions in Gaul itself, roused his determination to overthrow him without a view to personal aggrandizement. The time indeed was yet far distant when a foreigner could even conceive the idea of gaining the purple. But he fixed his eyes on Galba, as the ablest of the class from which fortune could make an emperor, and it was with vexation that he found the old chief too cautious to be driven headlong into a revolt, the event of which might seem so doubtful.<sup>3</sup>

Galba indeed had good reason to hesitate. Nero set a price on the head of Vindex, whose designs were speedily revealed to him, and though the forces of the Gaulish province were disposed to follow their chief, the more powerful legions of the Lower Germany, under Virginus Rufus, were in full march against

Virginus con-  
spires with  
Vindex.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Galb.* 4.: καὶ οὐ, τέκνον, τῆς ἀρχῆς ἡμῶν παρατρέψῃ . . . "viva! sane quando id ad nos nihil pertinet." The same presages and others are mentioned also by Tacitus, *Ann.* vi. 20.; Dion, *lvii.* 19.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 6. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, *lxiii.* 22, 23.; Suet. *Galb.* 6, 7.

*Ibid.*

them. The armies met at Vesontio, and there Vindex and Virginius at a private interview agreed to conspire together, but their troops could come to no such understanding; the Virginians attacked the soldiers of Vindex, and almost cut them to pieces. Vindex thereupon, with the haste and levity of his race, threw himself on his sword, and the rebellion seemed for a moment to be crushed. But Galba had become alarmed for his own safety. He had received communications from a rebel, all whose acts were well known to the government. He had been urged to proclaim himself emperor, and no refusal on his part could efface the crime of having been judged worthy of such a distinction. Indeed, so at least he pretended, he had already intercepted orders from Nero to take his life, and a plot for his assassination was opportunely detected among a company of slaves presented him by a freedman of the emperor.<sup>1</sup> Thus impelled to provide for his own safety, he called his troops together, and setting before them the images of the tyrant's noblest victims, harangued them on the state of public affairs. The soldiers saluted him as Imperator, but he would only allow himself to be styled Legatus of the Senate and the People. He proceeded, however, at once to prorogue all civil business, and provide for immediate war by raising forces both legionary and auxiliary, from the youth of the province. At the same time he convened the notables of the country, to give perhaps a civil colour to his military enterprise.<sup>2</sup> The Gaulish and Germanic legions, now reunited, after the death of Vindex, had offered to raise Virginius to the purple; they conjured him to assume the title of Imperator, and inscribe on his busts the names of Cæsar and Augustus.<sup>3</sup> But he steadily refused the

Disagreement  
between their  
armies, and  
battle of Ve-  
sontio.

Vindex slays  
himself.

Galba is saluted  
Imperator by  
his soldiers.

Virginius, pro-  
claimed by his  
own soldiers,  
declines the ti-  
tle.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Galb.* 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 1. c.

<sup>3</sup> Dion, lxxiii. 25.; Tacitus, *Hist.* i. 8., speaks more hesitatingly: "Nec statim pro Galba Virginius: an imperare voluisset dubium: delatum ei a milite imperium conveniebat."

honours thrust upon him, erased the obnoxious letters, and at length persuaded his admirers to leave the decision of affairs to the authorities at home. He entered, however, into communication with Galba, who had now, it seems, determined on the attempt, and the news was bruited far and wide that Gaul and Spain had revolted, and that, whoever might eventually obtain the empire, it had passed irrevocably from the monster Nero.<sup>1</sup>

At once it appeared how many pretenders to power might exist in the bosom of the provincial camps. The fatal

Other candidates for the empire. Claudius Macer in Africa, Fonteius Capito in Germania.

secret of the empire, *that a prince might be created elsewhere than at Rome*, so long undiscovered, so alien, as was supposed, from the sentiments of the age, was revealed in more than one quarter.<sup>2</sup>

Not in Gaul and Spain only, but in Africa and the Lower Germany, the legions were ready to make an emperor of their own chief. Claudius Macer in the one, Fonteius Capito in the other, were proclaimed by the soldiers. At the same time Salvius Otho, Nero's ancient favourite, who was weary of his long oblivion on the shores of the Atlantic, declared himself a supporter of Galba, and lent him his own slaves and plate, to swell his retinue and increase his resources. The Civil Wars had again begun.

Such was the march of disaffection, the first anticipations of which had been revealed to Helius before the end of 820,

Nero receives news of the revolt of Vin-dex.

and had induced him to urge the emperor, first by letter and afterwards in person, to hasten home. Nero, as we have seen, could not be persuaded to regard them seriously, or postpone to their consideration his paltry gratifications and amusements. After his return to Rome, he had again quitted it for Naples in March, 821, and it was on the 19th of that month, the anni-

<sup>1</sup> Clinton computes that Galba allowed himself to be proclaimed emperor on the 3rd April. *Fast. Rom.* i. 50.

<sup>2</sup> I adopt here the well-known observation of Tacitus at the opening of his Histories: "evulgato imperii arcano, posse principem alibi quam Romæ fieri." *Hist.* i. 4.

versary of Agrippina's murder, while presiding at a gymnastic exhibition, that he received the news of the revolt of Vindex. Still he treated the announcement with contempt, and even expressed satisfaction at the prospect of new confiscations. He witnessed the contests with unabated interest, and retired from them to a banquet. Interrupted by fresh and more alarming despatches, he resented them with petulant ill-humour; for eight days he would neither issue orders nor be spoken to on the subject. Finally arrived a manifesto from Vindex himself, which moved him to send a message to the senate, requiring it to denounce the rebel as a public enemy; but he excused himself from appearing in person, alleging a cold or sore throat which he must nurse for the conservation of his voice. Nothing so much incensed him as Vindex calling him *Ahenobarbus* instead of *Nero*, and disparaging his skill in singing. *Had they ever heard a better performer?* he asked peevishly of all around him. He now hurried trembling to Rome; but he was reassured, we are told, on the way by noticing a sculpture which represented a Gaulish soldier dragged headlong by a Roman knight.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, with his usual levity, instead of consulting in full senate, or haranguing on the state of affairs in the forum, he held a hasty conversation with a few only of his nobles, and passed the day in explaining to them a new water organ, on which he proposed, he said, *with Vindex's good leave*, to perform in public. He completed and dedicated a temple to *Poppæa*: once more he celebrated the games of the circus, once more he played and sang and drove the chariot. But it was for the last time. Vindex had fallen, but *Galba*, it was now announced, had raised the standard of revolt. The rebel's property in Rome was immediately confiscated, to which he replied by selling *under the spear* the emperor's estates in Spain. The hour of retribution, long delayed, was now swiftly advancing; courier

His levity succeeded by ill-humour, and again by presumptuous confidence.

Announcement of the defection of *Virginius* and *Galba*.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 41.

after courier was dashing through the gates, bringing news of the defection of generals and legions. The revolt of Virginius was no longer doubtful. At this intelligence the puny tyrant fainted: coming to himself he tore his robes and smote his head with pusillanimous wailings. To the consolations of his nurse he replied, with the cries of an infant, *Never was such ill-fortune as his: other Cæsars had fallen by the sword, he alone must lose the empire still living.*<sup>1</sup> At last he recollected himself sufficiently to summon troops from Illyricum for the defence of Italy; but these, it was found, were in correspondence with the enemy.<sup>2</sup> Another resource, which served only to show to what straits he was driven, was to land sailors from the fleet at Ostia, and form them into a legion.<sup>3</sup> Then he invoked the pampered populace to arise in his behalf, and dressed up courtesans and dancers as Amazons to attend his march: next moment he exclaimed that he would take ship for Alexandria, and there earn subsistence by singing in the streets.<sup>4</sup> Again he launched into invectives against the magistrates abroad, threatening to recall and disgrace them throughout his dominions: the provinces he would give up to pillage, he would slay every Gaul in the city, he would massacre the senate, he would let loose the lions on the populace, he would lay Rome in ashes. Finally, the tyrant's vein exhausted, he proposed in woman's mood to meet the rebels unarmed, trusting in his beauty, his tears, and the persuasive tones of his voice, to win them to obedience.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 42.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 9. This, I presume, was the force placed under Rubrius Gallus; Dion, *lxiil.* 27.

<sup>3</sup> Plut. *Galb.* 15.

<sup>4</sup> Dion, *lxiil.* 27.; Plut. *Galb.* 2.

<sup>5</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 43. This writer affirms that Nero deposed both the consuls, and assumed the fasces himself without a colleague, from a persuasion that the Gauls could not be subdued except by a consul. The story is not supported by other authorities, and seems in itself improbable. Neither Cæsar nor Camillus were consuls when they conquered the Gauls. Yet such a notion might have been instilled into the public mind by the victorious consulships of Marius. Or was sole consul the nearest approach an emperor could make to the office of

Meanwhile the excitement among the knights and senators at the prospect of deliverance kept pace with the progress of revolt abroad. Portents were occurring at their doors. Blood rained on the Alban mount; the gates of the Julian sepulchre burst open of their own accord. The Hundred Days of Nero were drawing rapidly to a close. He had landed in Italy about the end of February, and now at the beginning of June his cause had already become hopeless. Galba, though steadfast in his resolution, had not yet set his troops in motion: nevertheless, Nero was no longer safe in the city. The people, at first indifferent, were now clamouring against him; for there was a dearth of provisions, and a vessel, just arrived from Alexandria, was found, to their disgust, to bear not grain, but fine sand for the wrestlers in the amphitheatre.<sup>1</sup> The prætorians had been seduced by their prefect Nymphidius, to whom the camp was abandoned by the flight of Tigellinus. Nero was left without advisers; the senators stood aloof; of Helius, lately so powerful and energetic, we hear nothing. Terrified by dreams, stung by ridicule or desertion, when his last hope of succour was announced to have deceived him, the wretched tyrant started from his couch at supper, upset the tables, and dashed his choicest vessels to the ground; then taking poison from Locusta and placing it in a golden casket, he crossed from the palace to the Servilian gardens, and sent his trustiest freedman to secure a galley at Ostia.<sup>2</sup> He conjured some tribunes and centurions, with a handful of guards, to join his flight; but all refused; and one blunter than the rest exclaimed tauntingly, *Is it then so hard to die?*<sup>3</sup> At last at midnight, finding that even

dictator? At all events we shall find the consuls in their chairs immediately on the death of Nero.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 45. Comp. Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxv. 47.: "E Nilo arena."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 47. The Romans imagined Locusta a constant attendant at Nero's table. So in the rough but energetic phrase of Turnus (Fragm. apud Wernsdorf, *Poet. Min.* iii.) she is described as: "Circe inter vernas nota Neronis."

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 47. A quotation from Virgil: "Usque adeone mori miserum est?"

the sentinels had left their posts, he sent or rushed himself to assemble his attendants. Every door was closed; he knocked, but no answer came. Returning to his chamber, he found the slaves fled, the furniture pillaged, the case of poison removed. Not a guard, not a gladiator, was at hand to pierce his throat. *I have neither friend nor foe*, he exclaimed. He would have thrown himself into the Tiber, but his courage failed him. He must have time, he said, and repose to collect his spirits for suicide, and his freedman Phaon at last offered him his villa in the suburbs, four miles from the city. In undress and barefooted, throwing a rough cloak over his shoulders, and a kerchief across his face, he glided through the doors, mounted a horse, and, attended by Sporus and three others, passed the city-gates with the dawn of the summer-morning.<sup>1</sup> The Nomentane road led him beneath the wall of the prætorians, whom he might hear uttering curses against him, and pledging vows to Galba; and the early travellers from the country asked him as they met, *What news of Nero?* or remarked one to another, *These men are pursuing the tyrant.* Thunder and lightning, and a shock of earthquake, added horror to the moment. Nero's horse started at a dead body on the road-side, the kerchief fell from his face, and a prætorian passing by recognised and saluted him.<sup>2</sup> At the fourth milestone the party quitted the highway, alighted from their horses, and scrambled on foot through a cane-brake, laying their own cloaks to tread on, to the rear of the promised villa.<sup>3</sup> Phaon now desired Nero

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 48. Comp. Dion, lxxiii. 27.; Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iv. 9. 2. Eutrop. vii. 9.; Aur. Vict. *Epit.* 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Cadaver," possibly, the carcass of an animal; but the word is more commonly used for a human body. The odious familiarity of the Romans with such horrors may be illustrated from the story told of Vespasian (Suet. *Vesp.* 5.). "Prandente eo quondam canis extrarius e trivio manum humanam intulit, menseque subiecit." The prætorian met the party on his way towards the city; he was not privy to the change of feeling among his comrades.

<sup>3</sup> The villa lay between the Salarian and Nomentane roads (Suet. l. c.), which branched off from the city at the Colline gate. Strab. v. 3. 1.

to crouch in a sand-pit hard by, while he contrived to open the drain from the bath-room, and so admit him unperceived; but he vowed he would not go *alive*, as he said, *underground*, and remained trembling beneath the wall. Taking water from a puddle in his hand, *This*, he said, *is the famous Drink of Nero.*<sup>1</sup> At last a hole was made, through which he crept on all fours into a narrow chamber of the house, and there threw himself on a pallet.<sup>2</sup> The coarse bread that was offered him he could not eat, but swallowed a little tepid water. Still he lingered, his companions urging him to seek refuge, without delay, from the insults about to be heaped on him. He ordered them to dig a grave, and lay down himself to give the measure; he desired them to collect bits of marble to decorate his sepulchre, and prepare water to cleanse and wood to burn his corpse, sighing meanwhile, and muttering, *What an artist to perish.*<sup>3</sup> Presently a slave of Phaon's brought papers from Rome, which Nero snatched from him, and read that the senate had proclaimed him an enemy, and decreed his death, *in the ancient fashion.* He asked what that was? and was informed that the culprit was stripped, his head placed in a fork, and his body smitten with the stick till death. Terrified at this announcement, he took two daggers from his bosom, tried their edge one after the other, and again laid them down, alleging that *the moment was not yet arrived.* Then he called on Sporus to commence his funereal lamentations; then he implored some of the party to set him the example; once and again he reproached himself with his own timidity. *Fie! Nero, Fie!* he muttered in Greek, *courage, man! come, rouse thee!* Suddenly was heard the trampling of horsemen, sent to seize the cul-

<sup>1</sup> "Hæc est Neronis decocta:" Suet. Dion. In allusion, it may be presumed, to a beverage of water boiled, sweetened, and flavoured, which Nero had himself invented.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. l. c.: "Quadrupes per angustias effossæ cavernæ receptus in proximam cellam." The Roman houses were not furnished with sewers, but every bath had its drain.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. l. c.: "Qualis artifex pereo;" Dion, c. 29.



pruit alive. Then at last, with a verse of Homer hastily ejaculated, *Sound of swift-footed steeds strikes on my ears*, he placed a weapon to his breast, and the slave Epaphroditus drove it home.<sup>1</sup> The blow was scarcely struck, when the centurion rushed in, and, thrusting his cloak against the wound, pretended he was come to help him. The dying wretch could only murmur, *Too late*, and, *Is this your fidelity?* and expired with a horrid stare on his countenance. He had adjured his attendants to burn his body, and not let the foe bear off his head; and this was now allowed him: the corpse was consumed with haste and imperfectly, but at least without mutilation.<sup>2</sup>

Nero perished on the 9th of June, 821, at the age of thirty years and six months, in the fourteenth year of his principate.<sup>3</sup> The child borne him by Poppæa had died in infancy, and a subsequent marriage with Statilia Messalina had proved unfruitful.<sup>4</sup> The stock of the Julii, refreshed in vain by grafts from the Octavii, the Claudii, and the Domitii, had been reduced to his single person, and with Nero the adoptive race of the great dictator was extinguished. The first of the Cæsars had married four times, the second thrice, the third twice, the fourth thrice again, the fifth six times, and lastly, the sixth thrice also. Of these repeated unions, a large number had borne offspring, yet no descendants of them survived.

Extinction of  
the Cæsarean  
family with  
Nero.

<sup>1</sup> Hom. *Il.* x. 535.: "Ἰππων μὲ ὠκοπόδων ἀμφὶ κτύπος οὐατα βάλλει.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 49.

<sup>3</sup> The day was said to be the anniversary of the death of Octavia. Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* i. 52., calculates Nero's life at thirty years five months and twenty-six days, counting from December 15. 790, to June 9. 821; his reign at thirteen years seven months and twenty-eight days.

<sup>4</sup> The death of Poppæa had been quickly followed by Nero's marriage with Statilia Messalina, grand-daughter of Statilius Taurus, with whom he had previously intrigued, having procured the death of her husband, Atticus Vestinus, during his consulship, to obtain her. Suet. *Ner.* 85.; Tac. *Ann.* xv. 68, 69. The consulship and execution of Vestinus are placed in the year 818, while Poppæa was still alive. We hear no more of Statilia, except that she survived the emperor.

A few had lived to old age, many reached maturity, some were cut off by early sickness, the end of others was premature and mysterious; but of the whole number a large proportion, which it would be tedious to calculate, were victims of domestic jealousy and politic assassination. Such was the price paid by the usurper's family for their splendid inheritance; but the people accepted it in exchange for internal troubles and promiscuous bloodshed; and though they too had their sacrifices to make, though many noble trees were stripped of their branches under the Cæsars as starkly as the Cæsars themselves, yet order and prosperity had reigned generally throughout the empire; the world had enjoyed a breathing time of a hundred years, to prepare it for the outbreak of civil commotion, for the fiercer frenzy of international warfare, which are next to be related. With Nero we bid farewell to the Cæsars; at the same time we bid farewell to the state of things which the Cæsars created and maintained. We turn over a page in Roman history. On the verge of a new epoch we would treat with grave respect even the monster with whom the old epoch closes: we may think it well that the corpse even of Nero was un mutilated; that he was buried decently in the Domitian gardens on the Pincian; that though the people evinced a thoughtless triumph at his death, as if it promised them a freedom which they could neither use nor understand, some unknown hands were found to strew flowers on his sepulchre, and the rival king of Parthia adjured the senate to do honour to his memory.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly the Romans regarded with peculiar feeling the death of the last of the Cæsars.<sup>2</sup> Nero was cut off in

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 50. 57.: "Missis ad senatum literis . . . magno opere oravit, ut Neronis memoria coleretur." It is interesting to learn that the tyrant's obsequies were performed by two nurses of his infancy, and by Acte, the partner of his first excesses ten years before.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Galb.* 1.: "Progenies Cæsarum in Nerone defecit." Eutrop. vii. 9.; Oros. vii. 7.; Dion, lxi. 18., who cites a Sibylline verse:

ἔσχατος Αἰνεαδῶν μητροκτόνος ἡγεμονεύσει.

It will be remembered that Nero was descended through Agrippina from

Expectation of  
his return  
among both  
Romans and  
Christians.

early youth; he perished in obscurity; he was entombed in a private sepulchre with no manifestation of national concern, such as had thrown a gleam of interest over the least regretted of his predecessors. Yet these circumstances would not have sufficed to impart a deep mystery to the event, without the predisposition of the people to imagine that the dynasty which had ruled them for five generations could not suddenly pass away, finally and irrevocably. The idea that Nero still survived, and the expectation of his return to power, continued long to linger among them. More than one pretender arose to claim his empire, and twenty years later a false Nero was protected by the Parthians, among whom he had taken refuge, and only surrendered to the repeated and vehement demands of the Roman government.<sup>1</sup> This popular anticipation was the foundation, perhaps, of the common persuasion of the Christians, when the death of the prince was no longer questioned that he should revisit the earth in the character of Antichrist; and both Romans and Christians seem to have combined in believing that the East, and possibly that Jerusalem itself, would be the scene of his reappearance.<sup>2</sup>

Julia, the daughter of Augustus and Scribonia. His connexion with the Claudii was only adoptive.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 56.; Tac. *Hist.* ii. 8.: "Achala et Asia falso exterritæ, velut Nero adventaret."

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Suetonius, *Ner.* 40.: "Prædictum a mathematicis Neroni olim erat fore ut destitueretur. . . . Spoponderant tamen quidam destituto Orientis dominationem, nonnulli nominatim regnum Hierosolymorum." There will be different opinions whether this idea sprang originally from the Christians or the Romans; probably it was the result of a common feeling reacting from one to the other.

## CHAPTER LVI.

THE SENATE ACCEPTS GALBA AS EMPEROR.—HIS VIGOUR AND SEVERITY.—STATE OF THE PROVINCES AND THE LEGIONS.—GALBA ADOPTS PISO AS HIS COLLEAGUE, AND SUBMITS HIS CHOICE FIRST TO THE SOLDIERS AND AFTERWARDS TO THE SENATE.—PUNISHMENT OF NERO'S FAVOURITES.—OTHO INTRIGUES FOR THE EMPIRE, AND IS CARRIED BY THE SOLDIERS INTO THE PRÆTORIAN CAMP AND PROCLAIMED EMPEROR.—GALBA GOES FORTH TO MEET THE MUTINERS, AND IS ASSASSINATED, TOGETHER WITH PISO.—HIS CHARACTER AS AN EMPEROR.—OTHO SUCCEEDS, AND IS THREATENED WITH THE RIVALRY OF VITELLIUS.—REVOLT OF THE LEGIONS OF GAUL.—VITELLIUS, PROCLAIMED EMPEROR, ADVANCES TOWARDS ITALY.—UNEASY POSITION OF OTHO.—HE PUTS HIMSELF AT THE HEAD OF HIS TROOPS, AND MARCHES TO PLACENTIA.—CAMPAIGN IN THE OLSALPINE.—BATTLE OF BEDRIACUM.—DEFEAT OF THE OTHONIANS.—OTHO KILLS HIMSELF.—VIRGINIUS REFORMS THE EMPIRE.—THE SENATE ACCEPTS VITELLIUS.—HIS GLUTTONY, SELFISHNESS, AND BARBARITY.—ITALY PLUNDERED BY HIS SOLDIERS.—HE IS WITH DIFFICULTY DISSUADED FROM ENTERING ROME IN ARMS AS A CONQUEROR.—A. D. 68, 69. A. U. 821, 822.

AS soon as they were informed of Nero's departure from the palace, and even before he had quitted Rome, the consuls convened the senate at midnight. Such a summons, though not unprecedented, betokened a public crisis, and when the fathers hurried to the place of meeting, they were greeted with the announcement that the tyrant despaired of his throne and personal safety, and were invited to declare him a public enemy, and pronounce on him sentence of death. They were assured of the utter collapse of the means by which he might once have hoped to make head against the enemy: the prætorians had declared openly against him; some battalions he had sent to meet his assailant had already betrayed his cause; the troops in or near the city, which had been previously drafted from

The senate decrees Nero a public enemy.

the camps in Britain, Germany, and Illyricum for service in the East, were hostile or indifferent; finally, the sailors from the fleet at Ostia were ready to sell themselves to any power which could bid higher for them than the bankrupt emperor. No doubt with money in hand Nero could have protracted the contest; but his means had been exhausted by his frivolous expenses, and the senators knew that it was only by plundering them that he could suddenly replenish his coffers. If they still hesitated, the news that the wretched tyrant had fled the city before break of day sufficed to reassure them. They now felt that they could wreak all their vengeance safely; they responded with acclamations to the invitation of their chiefs, and in launching sentence of death against the culprit, charged their ministers to take him alive if possible, that they might enjoy the sight of his expiring agonies.

This savage satisfaction was, as we have seen, denied them; nevertheless justice was done on the tyrant, and the state was saved. So the senate solemnly declared, and the people, with the cap of liberty on their heads, rushed in crowds to the temples to do homage to the gods who had struck down tyranny, and restored freedom to Rome.<sup>1</sup> This demonstration of the populace was indeed worthless; but some attempt might at least have been expected on the part of the senate, to realize and secure this boasted liberty. The brave Virginus had asserted its right to choose an emperor; such was the furthest extent to which a true patriot could go in the cause of the republic, and such, it was fully understood, was the extent of Galba's meaning, when he proclaimed himself the legatus of the Senate and People. In this solution of the crisis all civil society, at least at Rome, was prepared to acquiesce. The consuls and the tribunes, the patricians and the commons, were equally satisfied with the promise held out to them from beyond the

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 57.; Dion, *lxxiii.* 29.; Tac. *Hist.* i. 4.: "Patres læti, usurpata statim libertate, licentius, ut erga principem novum et absentem." Yet, whatever licence the senate assumed, Tacitus does not intimate that it forgot for a moment that it still had a master.

seas, that the choice of the army should be submitted to the ratification of the supreme national council. Nor were the chiefs of the senate at this moment men of bold aspirations or vigorous resolution. One consul, Galerius Trachalus, was noted as a florid declaimer, and nearly connected with the courtiers of the empire; the other, Silius Italicus, was an orator also, and a man of letters, distinguished in later years for his epic on the Punic Wars, virtuous and amiable in private life, discreet and dignified in office, but far more inclined to sing the praises of the Scipios than to emulate them.<sup>1</sup> He beheld Galba descend the Pyrenees and the Alps with his Iberian and Gaulish auxiliaries; but he was dreaming of Hannibal and the Carthaginians, and never woke to comprehend the actual invasion of his country, and subjection of Rome by the sword.

Galba, we have seen, had been proclaimed imperator on the third of April. He was still engaged in making his preparations, or watching events, within his own province, for the death of Vindex had alarmed, and almost shaken him from his purpose, when the news of Nero's condemnation and death was brought him by one who professed to have himself beheld the body of the tyrant. He no longer delayed to advance; but it was necessary to take the long route by land, necessary also perhaps to have a personal interview with Virginus, and ascertain his real intentions and the disposition of the Gaulish legions. Arrived at Narbo, Galba was met by envoys from the senate, charged to convey the sanction of the republic to his claim. If the consuls could have hesitated for a moment in accepting him as their ruler, they would have been impelled by the necessity of counteracting the intrigues of Nym-

The senate  
sanctions the  
election of  
Galba.

<sup>1</sup> See Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* i. 52. Martial says of Silius, vii. 63

" . . . . Bis senis ingentem rexerat annum  
Fascibus, asserto qui sacer orbe fuit."

Comp. also Plin. *Ep.* iii. 7. Galerius was an intimate friend of Otho, and a Galeria, possibly his sister, was wife to A. Vitellius, the son of the courtier Lucius, soon to be a prominent competitor for the purple. Tac. *Hist.* i. 90.

phidius Sabinus, the prefect of the prætorians, who, as we have seen, had withdrawn his cohorts from their fidelity to Nero, and now hastened to offer their services to his rival, with many compliments and presents, asking to be installed, in return, in the highest offices of the state. But Galba was surrounded already by close adherents, who claimed the monopoly of his favours. T. Vinus, and Cornelius Laco, who shared and perhaps controlled his counsels, required him to reject these overtures. Nymphidius, stung with disappointment, conceived the hope of seizing the empire for himself. He thought himself secure of the prætorians, and, in order to gain the citizens also, alleged that he was descended, through his mother Nymphidia, from the emperor Caius. He had already sought their favour by surrendering some of Nero's creatures to their vengeance, and had made so much blood to flow, as to cause it to be declared in the senate that, if things went on thus, the tyranny of Nero himself would soon be regretted. Undoubtedly the prætorians as a body continued restless and discontented; they anticipated the loss of the imperial caresses which under Nero had been extended to them alone, and augured that preference under the new reign would be given to the faithful legionaries. Galba's character for severity and parsimony was notorious, and his caustic saying passed from mouth to mouth, that he was wont to *choose his soldiers, not to buy them*.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the enterprise of Nymphidius was hopeless, and so one of his own followers had told him, assuring him that not one family in Rome would voluntarily accept him as Cæsar.<sup>2</sup> *What*, exclaimed the tribune Antonius, *shall we choose Nymphidia's son for our emperor, and sacrifice to him the child of Livia, as we have already sacrificed the child of Agrippina?* Still, even in

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 5.: "Accessit Galbæ vox, pro republica honesta, ipsi anceps, legi ab se militem non emi." The term "legere" is derived from the ancient practice of the consul, the tribunes, and in some cases perhaps individual soldiers, choosing the best names for service from the roll.

<sup>2</sup> Patarch, *Galb.* 13

the licentious camp of the prætorians, the question of empire was a question of descent and dynasty. The claims of the intriguer were laughed to scorn. The soldiers swore fidelity to Galba, and closed their gates against his rival. When he implored admittance and rashly trusted himself among them, he was attacked with sword and spear, and cut to pieces without scruple.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Galba was approaching. From the moment he learned that the senate had sworn in his name, he dropped the title of Legatus and assumed that of Cæsar, while, to indicate that he was engaged in actual warfare in the state's behalf, he marched before his troops cloaked and belted.<sup>2</sup> Competitors, indeed, had risen in various quarters. Besides Clodius Macer in Africa, and Fonteius Capito in Germania, whose attempts have been already mentioned, we read of a Betuus Chilo, an Obultronius and a Cornelius Sabinus in Gaul, an Obultronius and a Cornelius Sabinus in Spain. But these pretenders were put down by the adherents of the senate in their own districts; they were all slain in the field, or taken and executed; and Galba himself, as the chosen of the senate, was held responsible for their deaths. The slaughter, indeed, of so many officers of rank caused some dismay at Rome, and this was increased when Galba demanded the sacrifice of such of Nymphidius's chief supporters as had not already killed themselves, among whom was the consul designate Cingonius Varro. The blood of Petronius Turpilianus, a consular, was also required without form of trial, as the man whom Nero had appointed to the command of his forces. The impression of Galba's severity was further enhanced when, on arriving at the Milvian Bridge, he replied to the presumptuous demands of Nero's marine battalions by ordering his men to charge them, and so entered Rome over their bodies. The citizens shuddered at the omen; but the scoffers who had made a jest of the emperor's gray hairs, and contrasted them

Of Betuus Chilo, Obultronius and Cornelius Sabinus.

Galba's vigour and severity in putting down his opponents.

Plutarch, *Galb.* 14.

Suet. *Galb.* 11.: Dion, *lxiiv.* 3.; καὶ γέρον καὶ ὁσπρὴς τὰ νεῦρα ὦν.



with the beaming locks of their Claudian Apollo, were effectually silenced.<sup>1</sup>

On the first of January, 822, Galba, who had entered the city only a few days previously, assumed the consulship together with T. Vinius, and all classes hastened to the Capitol to sacrifice to the gods, and swear allegiance to the new emperor. Six months had elapsed since the death of Nero, and the citizens had had time to meditate on the step they were pledged to take, in transferring supreme command from the divine race of the Julii to a mere earthborn dynasty, to a family of their own kind and lineage. The heroic age of the empire had vanished in that short interval. Whatever antiquarians and courtiers might assert, the attempt to connect an imperial house with the national divinities would never succeed again. The illusion had perished like a dream of youth, and the poetry of Roman life was extinguished for ever. It was with no surprise, with no shame, that the citizens now heard of new pretenders to the empire. There was no other claim to empire but force, and wherever two or three legions were encamped together, there resided the virtue by which emperors are created. Notwithstanding the rapid rout and disappearance of Galba's rivals in the provinces, fresh competitors might arise at any moment, and almost in any place, and it was with deep anxiety that patriots inquired what was the state of the provinces, the temper of their garrisons, and the character of their chiefs. The East, they learned, was as yet undisturbed. Syria was held by Licinius Mucianus, a man who, after a career of dissipation and place-hunting in the city, had been removed thus far from home by the jealousy rather than the fears of Claudius, and had been raised unexpectedly to the government by Nero on the sudden disgrace of Corbulo. Vespasian, though command-

Galba enters Rome and assumes the consulship, Jan. 1.

A. D. 69.  
A. U. 822.

State of the provinces and attitude of the legions and their chiefs.

<sup>1</sup> Plut. *Galb.* 15.; Tac. *Hist.* i. 7.: "Ipsa ætas Galbæ irrisui et fastidio erat, assuetis juventutis Neronis, et imperatores forma et decore corpora, ut mos est vulgi, comparantibus."

ing the forces now destined for the final reduction of Judea, was under the orders of his proconsul, whose indolence was satisfied with the second place in the empire, when he might have contended with Galba for the first. Egypt, though nominally held direct from the emperor at Rome, was, in fact, dependent at this moment on the attitude of Syria; and thus the chief granary of the city was secured for the elect of the senate. Africa, on the death of Clodius Macer, had devoted itself to Galba; the two Mauretanas, Rhætia, Noricum, and Thrace, all governed nominally by imperial procurators, were swayed, in fact, by the impulse given them by the legions of the nearest frontiers.<sup>1</sup> On the Rhine the authority of the new emperor was less placidly admitted. Though the southern and central parts of Gaul were generally well disposed to the government established at Rome, partly from their attachment to Vindex, the first of Galba's allies, partly from satisfaction with the privilege they enjoyed of the Roman franchise and immunity, there were certain spots on which the new emperor had laid his hand heavily, others, from their position connected in feeling with the legions of the Upper and Lower Germany, were less disposed to acquiesce in the decision of the city. The Germanic legions, divided into two armies, each three or four legions strong, were hostile to Galba.<sup>2</sup> The passions which had excited some of them to draw their swords against the troops of Vindex, were inflamed rather than allayed by victory. They wanted to present Virginus to the senate as the chosen of the army; they were not satisfied with his refusal to accept the empire: Galba had enticed him into his own camp, and carried him off, far from his own devoted legions, to Rome.<sup>3</sup> The Upper army, deprived of its favourite chief,

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Of the exact number of these legions, and the names by which they were distinguished, I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. The proper complement of these frontier provinces was four to each, as has been stated from Tacitus elsewhere, but one of them, at least, the Fourteenth, had been drafted into Britain.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 9.

disdained the rule of Hordeonius Flaccus, an old and sickly general. The Lower army had given some countenance to the attempt of Fonteius, and was ashamed of his easy overthrow. Galba humoured its vanity by sending it a consular legate, Aulus Vitellius; but the art and industry of this commander, in redressing its grievances and consulting its wishes, aimed at forming an interest for himself rather than riveting obedience to his master.<sup>1</sup> The four legions in Britain were occupied in their insular warfare; they were intent on securing estates and plunder, to form the basis of their own fortunes in the land of their adoption. They took no interest in the mutations of empire at Rome.

A few days after the first of January letters reached the palace announcing a mutiny of the troops of Upper Germania. They demanded another emperor in the place of Galba, but left the choice to the senate and people. Galba had already contemplated adopting an associate in the empire, and had discussed the matter with the most intimate of his friends; for with the indecision of old age, or possibly his natural character, he rarely acted on his own counsels, and was, indeed, generally an instrument in the hands of others. The project had become known, and, while the choice of the imperial conclave was yet uncertain, the citizens weighed among themselves the merits of the presumed candidates. The noblest birth and most ancient lineage were doubtless to be combined with high personal merits: the position of the Cæsar required to be strengthened by an appeal to popular prejudice, and no mere favourite of the palace could hope to satisfy the demands of the people at large. Accordingly, Vinus, despairing for himself, was content to urge the claims of Salvius Otho, while Laco and the freedman Icelus recommended Piso Licinianus, a descendant of the Crassi and Pompeii, a man whose high birth as well as his noble character had entailed on him the hatred of Nero, and subjected

Mutiny of the  
legions of Up-  
per Germania.  
Galba deter-  
mines to adopt  
Piso as a col-  
league in the  
empire.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 9. 52.

him to banishment. No time was now to be lost. Galba called together Vinus and Laco, with Marius Celsus, a consul designate, and Ducennius Geminus, prefect of the city, and *transacted* with them, in the phrase of Tacitus, the *comitia of the empire*. Their deliberations ended in the choice of Piso, to whom, from the antique severity of his habits and gravity of his demeanour, Galba was personally inclined. But these qualities were too similar to those of the emperor himself to reassure such among the citizens as trembled at his growing unpopularity.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing can be more grave and dignified than this election of an emperor, as represented to us by the most thoughtful expounder of Roman constitutional history.<sup>2</sup>

The aspirations of philosophers, the contrivances of practical statesmen, had, at last, and for once, attained their highest realization. Here was the best man of the commonwealth choosing the next best for his child, his associate, and his successor. The union of the Licinian and Scribonian houses with the Lutatian and Sulpician proclaimed the reinstatement of the Senatorial party, as opposed to the champions of the Plebs who had so long trampled on the faction of the Optimates. But besides this class-demonstration, demanded by the position of the new dynasty, justified by the forfeiture of its rivals, the improvement now introduced on the example of Augustus, who chose a successor from his own family, not from the citizens out of doors,—the selection of a younger before an elder brother, for his personal qualifications, for an elder Piso had been passed over,—the well-known character of the adopted, his mature age, his blameless life, his constancy under adverse

This adoption made in the interest of the senate.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 14.: "Ea pars morum ejus, quo suspectior sollicitis, adoptanti placuit."

<sup>2</sup> Of the six persons present, indeed, three at least perished immediately afterwards, and the account given us by Tacitus of the speech of Galba, and the demeanour of Piso, rests at best on popular rumour only. Tac. *Hist.* i. 15-17.: "Galba . . . in hunc modum locutus fertur . . . Pironem ferunt" . . . language in which our author sometimes disguises a dramatic invention of his own.

fortune,—all these circumstances combined to secure for this appointment the suffrage of patriots and statesmen beyond the ranks of any single order, or any party in the nation. The problem of government was solved:—could we but shut out the recollection of what preceded, and what followed,—the usurpation by one legion and the overthrow by another,—the proof made patent to posterity that neither the creation of Galba, nor the adoption of Piso, was the work of the commonwealth itself as founded on the will of the people ' Taken by itself no public act was ever more virtuous; but it had no firmer support than a fierce but unsubstantial reaction of public feeling, and its fortunes proved as baseless as its origin.

Galba conferred the empire with magnanimity; Piso accepted it respectfully and modestly, as a burden laid on him by his own order, which with him was equivalent to the commonwealth; the bystanders looked on with anxiety or envy; to the good, the innovation seemed fraught with peril, for it seemed to introduce a principle of rivalry within the walls of the palace itself; while the bad, with whom power at any price was the height of human ambition, grudged Piso his luck in having power, however precarious, thus thrust upon him. But how should this domestic arrangement be publicly ratified? what forms should be observed, what power in the state appealed to for its sanction? The association of Agrippa, and afterwards of Tiberius, with Augustus, had been rather implied by significant charges than directly submitted to the approval of the State. Galba had no reserve: his only wish, in the interest of his tottering government, was to secure the most effective recognition of the act he had accomplished. Should he, then, declare his will to the people from the rostra, and invite their acceptance? or should he call for a vote of the senate? or, lastly, should he demand the salutation of the army? A soldier himself, and raised to power by the soldiers, Galba knew where his real strength lay, and he determined to lead his destined successor to the camp, and

Galba submits  
his choice to  
the approval of  
his legions.

present him as such to his companions in arms: he might hope to engage the affections of the legions, which he sternly refused to buy with money, by a compliment to their pride. On the 10th of January the emperor carried his purpose into execution. He briefly announced his choice to the soldiers, citing the example of Augustus, and appealing to the way in which the legionaries chose recruits; but it was in a storm of rain and thunder, such as in the olden time would have deterred the magistrate from holding a public election, and—a portent more fatal and now more unusual—he accompanied the announcement with no promise of a donative. Though the tribunes, and centurions, and the first rank of the soldiers responded with the expected acclamations, the serried files behind His untimely austerity in refusing them a donative. maintained a gloomy silence, sufficiently indicative of surprise and ill-humour. The officers themselves declared that a trifling largess would have sufficed to conciliate them; but Galba was stern and immovable. It was a moment when a wise man would have temporized: but Galba, intelligent and able as he was, had no wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

From the camp the emperor turned to the Senate-house. His address to the senators was not less curt than that to the soldiers, and was conceived perhaps in language scarcely less military. But it was followed immediately by a more graceful harangue from The adoption accepted with satisfaction by the senate. Piso; and, whatever doubt or jealousy might prevail in some sections of the assembly, on the whole the act was felt as a compliment to the order, and greeted with general approbation. The first care of the now constituted government was to send legates to control the disaffected or vacillating legions, the Fourth and the Eighteenth, on the Rhine; the next, to restore the finances of the state, and supply, with no irregular severity or injustice, the necessities of its chief, who found an empty treasury, with a hungry populace at its doors. Galba's first measure was to demand the Measures for the punishment of Nero's favourites. restitution of the sums Nero had lavished on his unworthy favourites, computed to amount to

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* l. 17.

twenty-two millions of sesterces, leaving them, in scorn or pity, one-tenth only of their plunder.<sup>1</sup> Thirty knights were constituted a board for the recovery of these moneys; but the inquisition, as might be expected, was not generally successful. The grantees, it was alleged, had squandered their grants as fast as they obtained them, and no assets were forthcoming to clear their debt to the public. It was some consolation that the wretches to whom Nero had given were found as poor as those from whom he had taken. Another measure was directed to secure power over the soldiers. Galba began by dismissing some of the tribunes of the prætorian and urban guard, intending, no doubt, gradually to rid himself of his least trustworthy officers; but the process was marked enough to cause alarm, while it was too slow to effect its object.<sup>2</sup> On the whole, neither the people nor the soldiers were satisfied with the new emperor's policy; but he was misled, apparently, by the counsels of Vinus, who induced him indiscreetly to spare the life of Tigellinus, when the most obnoxious of Nero's favourites were led, amid general acclamations, to the scaffold. Nothing, it is said, would have so delighted the citizens as to have seen Tigellinus dragged, like Sejanus, through the forum.

Galba gives offence by sparing Tigellinus.

They continued to call for his head in the theatre and the circus; but Vinus had engaged to marry his daughter, a widow with a large dower, and for her sake he persuaded Galba to screen the guilty father, and proclaim that he was sinking fast under a natural disease.<sup>3</sup> Nor were the frugal soldier's habits conducive to popularity. Trifling instances of his parsimony were reported, and possibly exaggerated. He had groaned aloud when a rich banquet was served him. He had rewarded the diligence of his chamberlain with a dish of lentils. He had marked his content with a distinguished flutist by presenting him with five denarii, drawn deliberately from his own

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 20.; Plut. *Galb.* 16.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. c.: "Nec remedium in cæteros fuit, sed metus initium."

<sup>3</sup> Plut. *Galb.* 17.

pocket.<sup>1</sup> Such was the successor of the refined Augustus, and the magnificent Nero.

There was no man at Rome whose personal views were so directly thwarted by the elevation of Piso as Otho's; none felt himself so aggrieved, none was so bold, so unscrupulous, in seeking redress. Otho still smarted under the recollection of his exile; for, honourable though it was, the command of a

Otho, mortified at the adoption of Piso, determines to seize on the empire.

rude and distant province, protracted through the ten best years of life, could be regarded only as an exile; and yet even this was a milder penalty than he might expect from the jealousy of his new rulers.<sup>2</sup> If Galba, with the serenity of his age and character, could venture to disregard his rivalry, he expected no such indulgence from the younger Cæsar, too sure to retaliate on a man of years and position like his own the jealousy he had himself incurred from Nero. Long steeped in every luxury, and every sensual gratification exhausted, Otho held his life cheap: he resolved, from pride and caprice, to throw the die for empire as the only excitement now remaining, conscious of all its hazard, and content to perish if unsuccessful. Such a temper was a fearful symptom of the times. In this combination of voluptuousness and daring, in fascination of manners and recklessness of disposition, in lust of place and power, and contempt for the dangers which environed them, Otho may remind us of Catilina; but, in atrocity of purpose, he stands a full step in advance, inasmuch as Catilina was impelled to treason at least by an urgent necessity, while Otho plunged into it from mere wantonness and the pleasure of the game. The excuse he pleaded could not have imposed even on himself. For a loyal subject, even though once a friend of Nero, there was no insecurity under Galba, nor need he have despaired of winning the confidence of Piso. He had gained credit for moderation in his ten years' government; a new career of

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Galb.* 12.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Otho*, 3.: "Provinciam administravit quæstoribus (i. e. by civil, not military, officers), per decem annos;" i. e. from 811 (Dion, lxi. 11.) to 821.



virtue and reputation was open to him. But Otho was an elegant gambler: his virtues had been as capricious as his vices; he was weary of decorum, and now, long restrained from the gratification of his passion, he rushed back to the table with a madman's frenzy, prepared to stake his life against his evil fortune.

And Otho had other counsellors than Catilina. Instead of being the centre of a group of vicious associates, the oracle of bankrupts and prodigals, he was himself swayed by false impostors, the victim of flatterers and diviners. His wife Poppæa, who had passed him in the race of ambition, had entertained a parasitical brood of astrologers about her; Otho had yielded to the same fascinations also; and when the promise of his soothsayer Ptolemæus, that he should outlive Nero, had turned out true, he embraced with transport a second revolution, that he should become associated in the empire.<sup>1</sup> Ptolemæus himself, when he found how much his patron's imagination was inflamed, spared no means to effect the fulfilment of his own prophecy. The state of the legions in the provinces, the temper of the soldiery at Rome, alike suggested grounds of hope, and furnished objects to tamper with. The troops which Galba had led from the heart of Spain to the Tiber felt aggrieved by the length of their pilgrimage; for, stationed in their frontier camps, the legions were not often required to make distant marches, and the battalions destined for the East or the West were generally transported almost to their appointed quarters by sea. Their toils might, indeed, be recompensed, the remembrance of the dust and heat of the way might be sweetened by largesses; but Galba had stiffly refused to administer such silver salves, and they now stood, cap in hand, soliciting, by gestures if not with words, the liberality of the soldier's friend, such as Otho studied to represent himself. Accordingly, when he

Otho tampers  
with the com-  
mon soldiers.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 22.; Plut. *Galb.* 23., by whom the man is called Ptolemæus. Suetonius, *Otho*, 4., gives him the name of Selcucus, which may be a confusion with the name of the soothsayer of Vespasian. *Hist.* ii. 78.

received the emperor at supper, his creature Mævius Pudens slipped a gratification into the hands of the guard; and to this general munificence he added lavish acts of generosity to individuals.<sup>1</sup> It is observable, indeed, that these efforts were directed to the lower ranks rather than to the officers. The tribunes and centurions were loyal to their imperator, faithful to their military oath; they were superior, perhaps, to the petty causes of discontent which moved the turbulent multitude. Nevertheless, in the general relaxation of discipline, and the confusion incident to the assemblage of various corps in the city, a movement in the ranks alone might spread with sympathetic excitement. We have often seen already how powerless were the officers against the contagion of insubordination among their men. The privates were seduced, the legion was carried over. *Two manipulars engaged to transfer the empire of the Roman people, says Tacitus, in memorable words, and they did transfer it.*<sup>2</sup> Murmurs at the refusal of a largess, sighs for the licence of Nero's reign, disgust at the prospect of marching again to the frontiers, ran like wildfire along the ranks; the news of the revolt in Germany shook the common faith in Galba's authority, and as early as the fourteenth of January, the fifth day from Piso's appointment, the prætorians were prepared to carry Otho to the camp at nightfall, had not their leaders feared their making some blunder in the darkness, and seizing perhaps on the wrong man in the confusion of the moment. Yet delay was dangerous; indications of the con-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 24. According to Suetonius, Otho was so deeply involved in debt, that he declared he could not exist unless he became emperor (*Otho*, 5.): he must be cut in pieces, either by the soldiers in the field, or by his creditors in the forum. He raised many men for his desperate enterprise by selling a place about the court for a million of sesterces: "hoc subsidium tanti cepti fuit."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 25.: "Suscepere duo manipulares Imperium pop. Rom. transferendum; et transtulerunt." "Manipulares," privates: but one was, "tesserarius," an orderly; the other, "optio," an adjutant: both picked from the ranks for special service.

spiracy were here and there escaping; it was only the perverse jealousy of Laco, who refused to regard any suggestions which had not originated with himself, that prevented its discovery and prompt suppression.

On the morning of the fifteenth, Galba was sacrificing before the Palatine temple of Apollo, when the aruspex informed him that the entrails were inauspicious, and portended a foe in his own household. Otho was standing by. He heard the words, and smiled at their import, which corresponded with his secret designs. Presently his freedman Onomastus announced that his architect awaited him at home. The signal was preconcerted; it implied that the soldiers were ready, and the project ripe. He quitted the emperor's presence in haste, alleging that the architect was come to inspect with him some new-purchased premises: leaning on his freedman's arm, with the air of a careless loungeur, he descended through the house of Tiberius into the Velabrum, then turned to the right to the Golden Milestone beneath the Capitol in front of the Roman forum.<sup>1</sup> Here he was met by some common soldiers, three and twenty in number, who hailed him at once as emperor, thrust him into a litter, and, with drawn swords, bore him off, alarmed as he was at their fewness, across the forum and the Suburra. Passing unchallenged through the wondering by-standers, they reached the gates of the prætorian camp, where guard was kept by the tribune Martialis, who, whether privy to the plot or bewildered by the suddenness of the crisis, opened to them without hesitation, and admitted the pretender within the enclosure.

Meanwhile Galba was still sacrificing, *importuning the gods of an empire no longer his*, when the report arrived

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 27. The "house of Tiberius" was the first imperial addition to the original mansion of Augustus on the Palatine. It extended along the western side of the hill above the Velabrum. This passage shows that, as has been before suggested, there were common thoroughfares through the courts of the palace.

that some senator, his name unknown, was being hurried to the camp:<sup>1</sup> a second messenger announced that it was Otho: this man was followed by a crowd of all ranks and orders, breathlessly vociferating what they had seen or heard; but still some extenuating, like courtiers, the real magnitude of the danger. One cohort of the guard was stationed at the palace gates. It was judged expedient to ascertain first the temper of this battalion; but Galba was advised to keep out of sight and reserve his authority to the last, while Piso went forth to address it. The soldiers listened respectfully, and stood to their arms, with the instinct of discipline; but there was no clamour, no enthusiasm among them. Officers were sent in haste to secure a corps of the Illyrian army, which bivouacked in the portico of Agrippa; but they were ill-received, and even thrust back with violence. Others again sought to gain the Germanic cohorts, drafted from their legions by Nero for service in the East, and recently recalled precipitately from Alexandria. These men were better disposed towards Galba, on account of the care he had bestowed on them after their harassing voyage; nevertheless they hesitated to arm, and maintained an ominous silence. None ventured to try the disposition of the marine battalions, still resenting the slaughter of their comrades; and when three bold tribunes went resolutely to the camp of the prætorians, to dissuade them from their threatened mutiny, they were repelled with curses, and one of them disarmed by force. The emperor was deserted by his soldiers; but the populace rushed tumultuously into the palace, demanding the death of Otho, and the destruction of his associates, in the same tone of ferocious levity with which they would have called for the gladiators or the lions in the circus. Galba could derive no confidence from this empty clamour; as an old soldier he despised the nerveless mob of the streets; he still debated with Vinus and others whether to keep within

Galba is deserted by the soldiers.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 29.: "Ignarus interim Galba et sacris intentus fatigabat alieni jam imperii Deos."

doors, guarding the approaches, and give the traitors time to return to a better mind, or go forth at once to meet them, and quell the mutiny with a word and frown, or perish in arms as became a Roman general.<sup>1</sup>

Vinius urged the former course; Laco, as usual, opposed him; but assuredly Laco's counsel was the worthiest, and might well be deemed the safest. Galba, always it would seem irresolute, turned wistfully from one to the other, but the soldier's spirit prevailed, and he determined to act. He allowed Piso, however, to precede him to the camp. Scarce had the younger Cæsar gone than a report was circulated that Otho had been slain by the prætorians. All doubted; many disbelieved; presently men were heard to vouch strongly for the fact; they had seen it with their own eyes. The report was false, and possibly it was spread and confirmed by the usurper's adherents to draw the emperor from his palace walls, and betray him into the midst of his enemies. The artifice, if such it was, succeeded. Knights, senators, and people crowded round Galba, loudly murmuring at the disappointment of their revenge, and calling upon him to issue from the gates, and extinguish the last sparks of treason by his presence. Arrayed in a light quilted tunic, not in steel, and obliged by age and weakness to adopt the conveyance of a litter, Galba put himself at the head of the surging multitude.<sup>2</sup> One of the guards forced himself into his presence, and, waving a bloody sword, exclaimed that he had killed Otho. *Comrade*, said he, *who ordered you?* a touching rebuke which thrilled the hearts of the noblest of the citizens, and was long treasured in their memory as the true eloquence of an imperator.<sup>3</sup>

He goes forth from the palace to meet the mutineers.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 31, 32.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Galb.* 19.: "Loricam tamen induit linteam, quanquam haud dissimulans parum adversus tot mucrones profuturam."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 35.: "Commilito, inquit, quis jussit?" The incident is mentioned also by Suetonius, Plutarch, and Dion. It will be remembered that Augustus, the princeps and the tribune, shrank from calling the soldiers his "comrades."

By this time the revolt had gathered head within the camp. The movement was confined to the private soldiers; so, at least, we are assured; and it is almost affecting to remark the anxiety of the patriotic historian to explain that the first instance of successful mutiny at Rome was the work of the common herd, and in no sense that of their officers. Tribunes and centurions were disarmed, or kept aloof, while the crowd, without leaders and without order, moved by the common instinct of turbulent disaffection, thrust Otho between their standards fixed around the tribunal, on the very spot where a gilded image of Galba might remind them of the oath which bound them to his person. Otho himself, no longer his own master, hardly conscious perhaps of his position, stretched forth his arms to the right and left, kissing his hands towards the crowd, wherever the loudest shout resounded, *courting empire*, says Tacitus, *with the demeanour of a slave*.<sup>1</sup> He writhed under his ignominy as the puppet of a mob, and hesitated to assume the tone of command; but when the marine battalions advanced in a body, and swore fidelity to his orders, he felt himself at last an emperor, and addressed his partisans with the spirit and self-possession of their legitimate chief. The ceremony of installation was complete. Otho commanded the armouries to be opened, and the men rushed, prætorians and legionaries, Romans and auxiliaries, all mingled together, and seized the first weapons that came to hand, without distinction of rank or post in the service.

Otho proclaimed emperor in the camp.

The buzz of movement to and fro, and the discordant cries of the soldiers, penetrated from the camp into the city, and Piso, checking his first impulse to confront the mutineers in person, awaited Galba's arrival in the forum, and took his own place in the emperor's escort. The accounts now grew momentarily worse and worse; the old man seems to have lost his presence of mind,

Galba and Piso halt in the forum.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 36.: "Omnia serviliter pro dominatione." According to Suetonius (*Otho*, 6.), he said that he would accept only just as much power as they chose to leave him: "Id denum se habiturum quod ipsi sibi reliquissent."

and allowed his followers to urge on him their timid and conflicting counsels, to return to the palace, to repair to the Capitol, to occupy the rostra. Laoco would have seized the opportunity to wreak his private grudge by ordering the assassination of Vinius, under pretence that he was a friend of Otho, and a traitor to the emperor; but Vinius was on his guard, the moment passed, and Galba was still surrounded by the whole body of his friends, whose only hope now lay in a spontaneous rising of the people against the soldiery.

The mutual jealousy, indeed, which had long subsisted between these two classes might still have changed the aspect of affairs. The urban populace hated the soldiery, with whom they had no family ties, and so many of whom they now saw thronging their streets as the favourites of the Cæsar, and gifted with privileges which encroached upon their comforts and galled their pride. At this moment all the populace were in the streets, or filled the basilicas and temples; their eyes turned in amazement from side to side, their ears caught at every sound; alarmed and indignant, they awaited the event in silence.<sup>1</sup> With nobles for their leaders, and armed retainers of the nobles to support them, they might have proved not unequal to a conflict even with the trained swordsmen of the legions. And Otho was assured that they were arming. No time was to be lost. With colours flying and martial music, with measured step and naked weapons, advanced the battalions under his direction to the capture of the city and the overthrow of the laws.

A single cohort still surrounded Galba, when, at the sight of these advancing columns, its standard-bearer tore the emperor's image from his spear-head, and dashed it on the ground. The soldiers were at once decided for Otho: swords were drawn, and every symptom of favour for Galba among the bystanders was repressed by menaces, till they dispersed and

Otho advances  
at the head of  
the soldiers.

Assassination  
of Galba, fol-  
lowed by that  
of Vinius and  
Piso.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 40.: "Quale magni metus et magnæ iræ silentium esset."

fled in horror from the forum. At last the bearers of the emperor's litter overturned it at the Curtian pool beneath the Capitol. In a moment enemies swarmed around his body. A few words he muttered, which have been diversely reported: some said that they were abject and unbecoming; others affirmed that he presented his neck to the assassin's sword, and bade him strike, *if it were good for the republic*: but none listened, none perhaps heeded the words actually spoken; Galba's throat was pierced, but even the author of his mortal wound was not ascertained, while, his breast being protected by the cuirass, his legs and arms were hacked with repeated gashes. The murder of Galba was followed by that of Vinus, who was said to have in vain exclaimed that Otho could have no interest in his death: but there was evidently among the Romans a deep dislike to this man, and they were prone to believe in his treachery. Lastly, the noble Piso was attacked, and though, protected for a moment by the devotion of a centurion, whose fidelity is the only bright spot in this day of horrors, he made his way into the temple of Vesta, the goddess could offer no secure asylum; he was dragged forth by the instruments of Otho, under special orders to hunt him out and despatch him. The heads of all the three were brought to the victor of the day, and while he gazed with emotions of respect on Galba's, with some pity on that of Vinus, Piso's, it is said, he regarded with barbarous and unmanly satisfaction. These bloody trophies were then paraded through the streets by the brutal soldiers, many of whom thrust their reeking hands above the crowd, swearing that they had struck the first, the second, the tenth, or the twentieth blow; and when the distribution of rewards arrived, not less, we are assured, than a hundred and twenty claims were presented to the government from the pretended authors of the most notable feats of arms.<sup>1</sup> These ferocious soldiers were fully alive to their

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, who treats the story of Galba throughout with strange indifference, and almost levity, applies here a line from Archilochus (c. 27.):



political importance, and determined to insist upon it. The prætorians demanded the right of choosing their own prefects, and appointed Plotius Firmus and Licinius Proculus, while Flavius Sabinus, the elder brother of Vespasian, was nominated warden of the city.<sup>1</sup>

From our slender accounts of the emperor whose brief reign and sudden fall have been just related, we may conceive him a fine specimen of the soldier-nobles of his time, undoubtedly the finest class of Roman citizens. The men who governed the provinces, nobles by birth, senators in rank, judges and administrators as well as captains by office, represent the highest and largest training of the Roman character; for they combined a wide experience of men and affairs with the feelings of a high-born aristocracy, and the education of polished gentlemen. Long removed from daily intercourse with their more frivolous peers in the city, they escaped for the most part contamination with the worst elements of society at home; they retained some of the purity together with the vigour of the heroes of the republic; they preserved in an era of ideologists or sensualists the strength of character and manly principle which had laid the deep foundations of the Roman empire. They were conquerors, but they were also organizers; and so far, with respect at least to subjects of inferior race, they deserve to be reputed civilizers. They impressed on the mind of the Orientals a fear, upon that of the Occidentals an admiration, of Rome, which taught them first to acquiesce in the yoke, and afterwards to glory in it. These were the representatives of her moral power of whom Rome should

Galba a specimen of the soldier-noble of Rome.

ἐπὶ τὰ γὰρ νεκρῶν παρόντων, οὐδ' ἐμάρψαμεν ποσὶ,  
χίλιος φονῆς ἐσμέν.

The body of Galba was consumed privately by one of his freedmen, named Argius,—it is pleasing to record these traits of class-attachment,—and the ashes laid in his family sepulchre. His villa stood on the Janiculum, and his remains are said to repose in the gardens of the Villa Pamphili. Ampère, *Hist. Rom. & Rome*, § 4.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 41-46.; Suet. *Galb.* 20.; Dion, lxiiv. 6.

have made her idols, alike for the glory of their exploits and the influence of their will and character;—not the Claudii and Domitii, whom the chance of family adoption had raised to the lip-worship of courtiers and time-servers. We are tempted to gaze again and again, in the decline and decay before us, on the legitimate succession of true Roman nobility, to renew our admiration of its sense of duty, its devotion to principles of obedience and self-control, unshaken by the cavils of the schools, serving the emperor as the Genius of Discipline, worshipping all the gods after the custom of antiquity, but trusting no god but its country.

The Romans considered Galba to have lost the empire by mismanagement. After summing up his qualities,—his desire for fame, but dignified reserve in awaiting rather than seeking it, his abstinence from extortion, his private frugality, his public parsimony, the moderation of his passions, the mediocrity of his genius, the slowness and discretion of his conduct, which passed with many for wisdom, finally his freedom from vices rather than possession of virtues,—Tacitus, speaking solemnly in the name of his countrymen, declares that all men would have pronounced him fit to bear rule at Rome, had he but never ruled.<sup>1</sup> Such a judgment it is impossible for us now to question; nevertheless, there seems nothing to be said, as far as our evidence goes, against his administration, except his fatal stiffness with regard to the expected donative. The great act of his short reign, the appointment of an associate, was apparently as wise as magnanimous, and the choice, itself probably judicious, was certainly determined by no unworthy motive. It is true, however, that the character of the legionary chief was generally little fitted for rule in the city. The camp officers were rarely men of liberal minds or elevated views: though the control of a province might seem, at first sight, a proper introduction to the government of an empire, it must never be forgotten that the province was no

Galba a good  
proconsul, but  
not a good em-  
peror.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 49.: "Omnium consensu capax Imperii nisi Imperasset."

more than a camp to the proconsul, and that he seldom stepped, in his administration of it, beyond the curt and rigid forms of military law. Though these stern soldiers were deeply imbued with respect for the name of the senate at a distance, they were not likely to restrain their wills in deference to it, when actually face to face. And accordingly we find that Galba, when he appointed Piso his colleague, sought the ratification of his act in the first instance, not from the senate, but from the soldiers. And if we lament, in him, an indecision at the most trying moments, such as we should not expect in one accustomed to command, we may ascribe it less to natural infirmity of character, or the timidity of old age, than to a rising consciousness that, with every qualification for governing a province, he was unequal to the burden of empire.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, no small proportion at this time of the citizens in the toga, and all the citizens under arms, were fully convinced that a chief of the legions was quite fit to be an emperor. We have seen how many pretenders to the purple started up at the moment when the world abandoned Nero. One after another the star of Galba had extinguished these lesser luminaries; but new competitors for power were ready to take their place, and had his short career been but a little protracted, Galba too would soon have been required to come forth and defend his power by arms. The next change in the succession served only to strengthen this necessity. From the moment that he stepped through an emperor's blood into the palace of the Cæsars, Otho was made aware

Otho is threatened immediately with a rival in Vitellius.

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, who describes Galba's figure with his usual minuteness,—*"Statura fuit justa, capite præcalvo, oculis cæruleis, adunco naso,"*—adds that his feet and hands were so much distorted by gout, that he could neither wear shoes nor unroll a volume. He was also disfigured and incommoded by a large wen on his right side. At the same time he boasted of his health and strength: *ἐγὼ μοι μὲν ὅς τις ἐπυρεθὲν ἔστιν*, he had said, only a few days before his death. *Galb.* 20, 21. C. Galba, the emperor's father, was deformed. See the jokes upon him by Augustus and others in *Macrob. Saturn.* ii. 4. 6.: *"Ego te monere possum, corrigere non possum."* *"Ingenium Galbæ male habitat."*

that he in his turn must fight if he would retain his newly acquired honours. It was in vain that the senate prostrated itself obsequiously before the murderer of its late champion, accepted him as emperor, and heaped upon him all the titles and functions of the sovereign power.<sup>1</sup> He turned with bitter contempt from the vile flatteries of the populace, and the acclamations with which they greeted him by the name of Otho-Nero, as if they anticipated from his accession only a renewal of the orgies of the circus and the theatres, to the heralds who followed one another in quick succession, bringing him accounts of the progress of sedition in Gaul, and the formidable attitude assumed by Vitellius, at the head of the armies of the Rhine.<sup>2</sup> The temper of this upstart, the dissolute son of one of the most profligate courtiers of the late reigns, was unfavourably known at Rome, and the prospect of a civil war, from which Galba's good fortune had saved the state, was aggravated by the personal defects of both competitors. Already the best and wisest of the citizens looked elsewhere for the saviour of the commonwealth, and augured from the vigour and discretion of Vespasian, then commanding in Palestine, that he would be the fittest man to step in between them, and wrest the prize from both.<sup>3</sup>

The best citizens already look to Vespasian.

Aulus Vitellius, whose father Lucius had been censor with Claudius, and thrice consul, was born in 788, and was now

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 47.: "Accurrunt patres, decernitur Othoni tribunitia potestas, et nomen Augusti, et omnes principum honores."

<sup>2</sup> It was to humour the populace, we may believe, that Otho himself, if we are to credit Suetonius and Plutarch, assumed, in some of his despatches, the odious name of Nero, and ordered the tyrant's statues to be restored. Tacitus only mentions that he was "supposed to have contemplated" celebrating the memory of Nero, and that some persons took upon themselves to re-erect his statues. Otho contented himself with paying that honour to Poppæa, of whom he seems to have been passionately enamoured. He contemplated also marrying Statilla, the relict of his predecessor, no doubt to strengthen his title in the estimation of the populace. Suet. *Otho*, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 50.

The character  
of Vitellius.

accordingly in his 55th year, older by seventeen years than his rival Otho. His early intimacy with Tiberius at Capræ had obtained for him a scandalous notoriety; he humoured with equal compliance the follies of succeeding Cæsars, and drove the chariot in the circus with Caius, or played dice with Claudius. Nero's favour he gained by his adroitness in combating the young prince's coyness, and insisting on his coming forward to play and sing at a public festival. Nevertheless, this unscrupulous courtier had not wholly abandoned himself to the vices and pleasures of the city. He had obtained some reputation in rhetoric and letters, and, moreover, he had served as pro-consul, and again as legatus in Africa, where he had acquired a reputation for uprightness.<sup>1</sup> At Rome, however, he had given the rein to his cupidity, or, possibly, the public voice was there more addicted to calumny. It was whispered that he had robbed some temples of their golden ornaments, and replaced them with baser metal. But his profusion, we are assured, was at least equal to his avarice, and when Galba chose him for command in Germany, his resources were so exhausted that he was obliged to leave his wife and children in a hired lodging, while he let his own handsome mansion to strangers. The Romans were astonished, it is said, at the selection, for at the moment the post was of more than ordinary importance. They surmised that he had found a powerful friend in Vinius, attached to him by their common interest in the Blue faction of the circus; or insinuated that with the jealous emperor his bad character was itself a merit.<sup>2</sup>

The combat between the troops of Vindex and Virginius

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Vitell.* 3-5.: "Singularem innocentiam præstitit." Such testimony in favour of a man who has received no quarter from ordinary history, ought to be specified. Yet it is open to us to inquire whether the "innocence" here signalized implies equity and moderation towards the provincials, or indulgence and popular manners in connexion with Roman officials, the quaestors, and pro-consular staff.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Vitell.* 3-7.

had left deep bitterness behind, though the one chief was dead, and the other had relinquished his command. The victorious legions were those of the German frontier, almost the remotest garrisons on the continent, and accordingly the furthest out off from the sympathies of Rome and Italy. Few, indeed, of the rank and file of these armies were really Romans in birth; their cohorts, originally levied within the Alps, had long been recruited in the provinces beyond, and it was by Gaulish hands that Gaul was now for the most part defended. Still, even to natives of Narbo or Tolosa, service on the Rhine had been a distant exile; they had long sighed to exchange the winters of the North for the sunny climes, not yet forgotten, of their birth; while even the land of the Sequani or the Ædui, on which they had fought and conquered the battalions of Vindex, they regarded as foreign and hostile, and looked wistfully on its wealth as the legitimate reward of their victory. Between these regions and Italy lay the Claudian colony of Lugdunum, the inhabitants of which were devoted to the name of their patron Nero, and jealous of the rival strongholds of Augustodunum and Vesontio, recently favoured by Galba with a remission of tribute. Every rumour from Rome passed through their city, and they made use of their position to embitter, by fiction or misrepresentation, the feud between the legions, and foster jealous feelings towards the emperor of the senate. Vitellius, as we have seen, was sent by Galba to command the army of Lower Germany. He had reached its quarters at the beginning of December. His mission really was to soothe rather than punish, and, instead of the dismissal of centurions and decimation of manipulars, with which the Lyonnese had threatened them, the soldiers found, to their surprise, that punishments were remitted, honours distributed, and the ill-treatment they had suffered through the avarice and injustice of their late chief alleviated. Thus far

Vitellius is incited to revolt by the legions in Gaul.

Tac. *Hist.* i. 51.: "Infensa Lugdunensis colonia et pertinaci pro Nerone fide, fecunda rumoribus."

Vitellius, we may suppose, carried out the instructions furnished him by Galba; but the profuseness of his liberality, with borrowed funds, seemed to betoken already ulterior designs, and he soon lent an ear to the suggestions of Al-lienus Cæcina and Fabius Valens, legates of two legions on the Rhine, who urged him to put himself at the head of a general insurrection. They flattered him with the assurance of the regard in which he was held by the soldiers, the provincials, and the citizens of Gaul; promised him the aid of Hordeonius with the troops of Upper Germany; persuaded him that the garrisons of Britain would cross the sea to join or follow him, that the subjects of Rome, far and wide, were ripe for revolt against the senate, that the empire that feeble body had ventured to confer was a shadow which would vanish in the first flash of his weapons. It was well, they added, for Virginus to hesitate. His origin was obscure; his father was a simple knight; and he might safely decline the imperium he could not securely wield. With Vitellius it was otherwise; his birth was noble, his father had been censor and thrice consul; his rank made a private station dangerous, but was not unworthy of the highest elevation.<sup>1</sup> To a man who had once admitted the idea of treason this reasoning was not without its weight. That it had been used to him at all made him an object of suspicion, and to be suspected, as the parasite of four Cæsars well knew, was a sure presage of disgrace.

The two officers above mentioned will play a considerable part in the events which are to follow. Of Cæcina's previous history we only know that Galba had advanced him, as a zealous partisan, from the quæstorship in Bætica to the command of a legion in Upper

Cæcina and Valens, partisans of Vitellius.

<sup>1</sup> The genealogists had kept pace with the ascent of the Vitellii, and had already traced them from Faunus, the legendary king of the Aborigines, and Vitellia, a Sabine divinity. Their historic celebrity, however, did not date beyond P. Vitellius, born at Nuceria, a Roman knight, procurator of Augustus, who left four sons, all of whom became magistrates and senators. Suet. *Vitell* 1, 2.

Germany, but he had incurred the emperor's displeasure, and been subjected to a prosecution for embezzlement. The crimes of Valens had been more daring. At the head of the First legion in Lower Germany he had urged Virginius to assume the purple, and on his refusal had pretended to disclose his intrigues to Galba. By him the death of Fonteius had been effected; and, though Galba had been assured that Fonteius was a traitor, many believed that this charge also had been forged by Valens, as an excuse for ridding himself of a man who, like Virginius, had declined his treasonable suggestions. Valens now complained that his merits were not duly rewarded, and the arrival of the weak and vain Vitellius seemed to offer another opportunity of pushing forward a candidate for the purple, behind whose cloak he might himself rise to honours. For it was one of the most fatal symptoms of national decline, that unlawful ambition was not confined to the highest object, but that officers, far too low in rank and dignity to aspire to empire themselves, were eager to thrust it upon others for the lesser rewards of a subordinate.<sup>1</sup>

Vitellius still hesitated: his ideas were slow, and his spirit not equal to the conception of a great design. He was more intent on sensual gratifications than the prosecution of a higher though more criminal ambition. But meanwhile the murmurs of the soldiers were increasing, and the Treviri and Lingones, the most powerful of the states near which they were quartered, resenting the penalties Galba had inflicted on them for their leaning to the side of Nero, fanned the flame of discontent. When, on the first of January, the men were drawn up to take the oath to the emperor, the legions of the Lower province performed their duty coldly and reluctantly, but those of the Upper absolutely refused to repeat the words of their tribunes, tore down the images of Galba, and trampled them under foot. Yet such was still

Vitellius proclaimed emperor by the Germanic legions.



their sense of discipline that they insisted on the oath being administered to them in the names of *the Senate and People*, according to the usage of the republic.<sup>1</sup> The determination of the soldiers was irresistible. Four only of the centurions of the Eighteenth legion made an effort to save Galba's images, and they were seized and thrown into chains; while Hordeonius looked on without attempting to enforce his authority. The standard-bearer of the Fourth legion, which also belonged to the Upper province, was sent to Colonia Agrippina, and brought the news to Vitellius the next night at supper, of the defection of the whole Upper army from Galba. They were ready to serve the Senate and People, but they demanded another Emperor. The moment for decision had arrived. The advisers of Vitellius were prompt and clamorous, and he yielded almost passively to their instances. Presented as their leader, he was accepted with acclamations: his name was passed from mouth to mouth, while those of Senate and People ceased to be repeated at all.<sup>2</sup> The whole of the legions on the frontier combined in open revolt against the faction of Galba, and were supported by the resources, freely tendered, of the province behind them.

A military revolution had commenced. Vitellius was the emperor of the army. In assigning the offices of the imperial household, it was from the army alone that he made his appointments. His stewards, secretaries, and chamberlains, the most confidential of his ministers, were chosen, not from the freedmen of his family, but from Roman knights, officers of the prætorium; privates received money from the fiscus to buy their indulgences from the centurions.<sup>3</sup> The ferocity with which they demanded the punishment of the most obnoxious officers was approved and gratified, and the

Vitellius, with the main body of his forces, prepares to march southward in three divisions.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 55.: "Ac ne reverentiam imperii exuere viderentur, Senatus populiq[ue] Rom. obliterata jam nomina sacramento advocabant."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 56, 57.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 58.: "Vacationes centurionibus ex fisco numerat." Comp. *Ann.* i. 17.: "Hinc sævitiam centurionum et vacationes munerum redimi."

vengeance they solicited for the death of Fonteius was only half eluded by the substitution of a centurion who struck the blow for the chief of the galleys under whose orders he had acted. The man who was thus withdrawn from their fury seems to have been a Gaul by birth, though his name, Julius Burdo, shows that he was adopted into the gens of the imperial family; and he owed his life, it may be presumed, to the policy of Vitellius, anxious not to offend the provincials, whose aid he required, and by whom his forces were supplied. On the same account, no doubt, Civilis, a leader of Batavian auxiliaries, was snatched from the hands of the legionaries, and the fidelity of the light native cohorts he commanded as a separate corps was preserved to the common cause. The armies of the Rhine seem to have numbered at this time seven legions: an eighth, the *Italio*, was stationed at *Lugdunum*. The garrisons of Britain signified their adhesion to the league, and contributed perhaps some battalions to the force now preparing to descend upon Italy. But the great interests of the empire were still sacred in the eyes of the usurper, and he would not leave the frontiers defenceless. Some cohorts were to be left behind in the principal stations, and these reinforced by provincial levies. Meanwhile the armament destined for the enterprise was divided into three bodies. Valens was directed to take the route of the *Cottian Alps*, with the first, comprising some chosen corps of the Lower army marshalled under the eagle of the Fifth legion, amounting, with numerous cohorts of allies, to forty thousand men. *Cæcina* undertook to penetrate the *Pennine* pass; and his force, though nominally but one legion, the *Twenty-first*, numbered thirty thousand. The main body, led by Vitellius himself, was to follow; and this too was amply supplied with battalions of German auxiliaries. These foreigners were among the most devoted to the new emperor's fortunes. They exulted in the title of *Germanicus* which he was now induced to assume, as chief, not as conqueror, of the German people: perhaps they were the more delighted at his refusing to accept the hostile ap-

pellation of Cæsar.<sup>1</sup> A favourable omen contributed to raise their spirits. At the moment when Valens commenced his march southwards, an eagle, the bird of empire and of Rome, soared above the heads of the soldiers, and, unmoved by their cries, sailed majestically before them, and *marshalled them the way that they were going.*

Trèves, accustomed to the sight of the legions, received the moving masses without distrust. Metz, in its terror, made a show of opposition, which was expiated with blood. At Laon the news of the death of Galba caused no halt; but it served to remove all hesitation in the minds of the provincials, who, while they hated both Vitellius and Otho, inclined naturally to him from whose wrath they had most to apprehend. At Langres a corps of Batavi, detached from the Fourteenth legion, showed some indisposition to join. They were reduced by force of arms, some examples made, and the united armament again swept onward. Autun was commanded to furnish large supplies; its refusal might at least offer a plea for plunder; but fear counselled prompt obedience. Lyons gave its quota without reluctance.<sup>2</sup> The Italic legion was here required to join, and a single cohort of the Eighteenth was left behind in its place. Between Lyons and Vienne existed an ancient animosity. Galba had recently mulcted the one city and enriched the other. The Lyonnese now prompted

Valens advances through Gaul, and crosses the Mont Genevre.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 62.: "Nomen Germanici Vitellio statim inditum: Cæsarem se appellari etiam victor prohibuit." Suet. *Vitell.* 8.

<sup>2</sup> An apology is due, perhaps, for using the modern names of these cities. In writing the history of the Romans in Gaul at this period we have this difficulty, that the old Gaulish names of the cities had generally become disused, such as Divodurum (Metz), while the later appellations, Mediomatrix, Leuci, Treviri, Lingones, belong to neither ancient history nor modern. Tacitus still employs the circumlocution civitas Lencorum, Lingonum, &c. I might write Augustodunum, Lugdunum, or Vienna, but it seemed better to preserve uniformity at least on the same page. It will be observed that I generally adopt the modern names of rivers rather than the ancient, because use has sanctioned it, and in fact they are in most cases identical in origin, and only vary in pronunciation,

the Vitellian soldiers to avenge their injuries on their more favoured neighbours. The Viennese, in consternation, came forth in the garb of suppliants, and, by a bribe, it was said, administered skilfully to Valens, obtained an indulgent hearing. But Valens himself was obliged in turn to bribe his own soldiers, by a largess of three hundred sesterces to each. At every place indeed where he halted his devouring legions, and at every place which he was induced to pass without halting, this rapacious chief required to be gratified with money, under threats of plunder and conflagration. His line of march from Vienne lay through the country of the Allobroges and Vocontii, and so by the well-trodden pass of the Mont Genève into Italy.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the other stream of invasion was descending through the country of the Helvetii, a people fiercer and more brave than the long pacified western Gauls, and not yet aware of the death of Galba, whose name was still remembered perhaps with respect in the valleys of the Rhone and Drance.<sup>2</sup> The licence Cæcina allowed his soldiers was here fiercely resented, and the course of the expedition was tracked with blood and fire, while the Roman garrisons in Rætia were invited to attack the natives in the rear. Driven from fastness to fastness, the Helvetii made their last defence behind the walls of Aventicum, and yielded only to the threat of a regular siege, of storm, sack, and slaughter. Cæcina was now satisfied with the execution of their leader, Julius Alpinulus, and left the other captives to be dealt with by Vitellius at his leisure.<sup>3</sup> The poor people were allowed to send a deputation

Cæcina marches through the country of the Helvetii, and over the Great St. Bernard.

<sup>1</sup> The mention of Lucus Augusti or Luc indicates the route taken by this division of the Vitellians, which must have crossed from the Drôme to the Durance, and so by Embrun to the Col Genève. Tac. Hist. i. 62-66.

<sup>2</sup> Sulpicius Galba, the legatus of Cæsar and conqueror of the Seduni, was the emperor's great-grandfather. Suet. Galb. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Aventicum, the modern Avenches. Tac. Hist. i. 67-70. Its sufferings were afterwards repaid by the foundation of a colony under Vespasian. The pretty but, unfortunately, spurious epitaph on Julia Alpinula—"Exorare patris necem non potui," &c.—refers to this event.

to the emperor; but he gave them a harsh reception, while his soldiers furiously threatened them: they obtained grace at last through the artful eloquence of Claudius Cossus, one of their number, who swayed the feelings of the multitude to compassion, not less boisterously expressed than their recent anger.

While this double invasion, like that of the Cimbri and Teutones of old, was thus beetling on the summits of the Alps, Otho was preparing to receive it with alertness and intrepidity. Bounding from his voluptuous couch at the first sound of the trumpet, cheerful at the sight of danger as he had been anxious and desperate amidst luxuries and honours, his first aim was to secure the good wishes of the best men, by sacrificing the detested Tigellinus, and releasing Celsus, a trusty adherent of Galba, whom he had saved before from his own soldiers and reserved perhaps with a view to the crisis which had now arrived. Here was an example of pardon for the past, and hope also of pardon for the future. The Vitellians, it proclaimed, need not despair: let them repent of their revolt and resume their allegiance to the chief of the state, accepted by the Senate and People. The emperor deigned to make overtures of conciliation to Vitellius himself. He addressed him with more than one letter, in which, with fair words and flattery, he offered him money and favour, and any tranquil retreat he might himself select for the enjoyment of ease and luxury in a private station.<sup>1</sup> Vitellius too, on his part, was equally timid, or equally politic, and several messages of compliment passed between the rivals, while each was determined,—for one, at least, his own officers had determined,—to abide the issue of a contest. Meanwhile on either side secret emissaries were employed to tamper with the adherents of the opposite party. Valens tried to shake

Otho prepares for war, but offers terms of accommodation.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 74. Suetonius goes further, and affirms that Otho “offered himself” as colleague to Vitellius, and proposed to marry his daughter. *Otho*, 8. Dion says that he proposed to accept Vitellius as his own colleague. *lxiiv.* 10.

the devotion of the prætorians to Otho, by representing his own emperor as the first proclaimed, and their chief as a mere intruder : but these attempts had no success either in Rome or in Gaul ; men's minds were everywhere prepared for battle, and would not be disappointed of the slaughter, and the spoil or confiscation which might be expected to follow.

During the advance of the invaders from the North, the news of Otho's accession had flown fast into the East, and even in the West it had out-stripped the heralds of Vitellius. The troops in Illyricum were the first, as they were the nearest, to accept the appointment of Otho, and this accession of force gave him considerable confidence. Mucianus from Syria, Vespasian from Palestine, announced the adhesion of their legions to the choice of the capital ; the oath of fidelity was repeated without dissent along the whole coast of Africa, Crescens, a freedman of Nero, leading the way at Carthage, and presuming to anticipate the proconsul's decision. Cluvius Rufus, who commanded in one of the provinces of Spain, reported that the troops throughout the peninsula would prove faithful to the murderer of Galba ; but suddenly it was found that they had declared for Vitellius. Julius Cordus administered the oath in Aquitania ; but here again the emissaries of Vitellius succeeded in bringing the soldiers over to their own side. The Narbonensis naturally embraced the Gaulish faction, overawed by the proximity of its formidable armies. Thus the legions throughout the whole Roman world stood to arms ; the civil functionaries, the citizens, the provincials, and lastly the allies and tributaries followed the impulse of the soldiery, and were prepared, by force of habit, if not from personal inclination, to yield them the support they required. This universal movement of civil strife was primarily a military one ; but in every quarter the people were ranged, as far as they could render service, on the side chosen by their presidiary troops. In fact the population generally throughout the empire, disarmed, unwarlike, and accustomed to look on the armed soldier as the appointed ar-

The legions and provinces range themselves on one side or the other.

biter of its destinies, had now lost whatever independence of choice or power of action it may once have claimed to exercise in questions of imperial policy.<sup>1</sup>

It was among the first cares of Otho's government, so to order the succession of consuls for the year as to secure him friends without increasing the number of his enemies. The death of Galba and Vinus left both chairs vacant, and so, in the confusion of the times, they seem to have remained to the end of February. To maintain the dignity of the imperial office, as well as to give to it, as it were, the sanction of the senate, Otho named himself and his brother Titianus consuls for March and April; Virginus was appointed to succeed in May, a compliment to the Gaulish legions which Galba had jealously withheld, with Vopiscus, who was connected with the colony of Vienna, for his colleague. The other consulships for the year, two months being often at this period a common term of office for each pair, were confirmed to the personages whom Galba, or even Nero before him, had already designated. Priesthoods and augurships were bestowed on veteran dignitaries, who had passed the age for more laborious occupations, and the children of deceased exiles were compensated for their sufferings by the restoration of honours forfeited by their fathers. Many representatives of noble houses were thus readmitted to the senate, and some who had been punished under Nero for malversation in their provinces were pardoned, as though they too had been innocent victims of an indiscriminate tyranny. Such were the new emperor's measures for conciliating the nobles. At the same time he issued edicts in rapid succession for the gratification of the provincials, whose fidelity it seemed most important to secure, among whom were the people of Bætica in Spain, and the Lingones in Gaul. The rumour that he contemplated celebrating Nero's memory as a boon to the populace at Rome was probably an invention of his enemies.<sup>2</sup>

Measures of  
Otho's govern-  
ment.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 76-78.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 77, 78.; Plutarch, *Otho*, 3.

We may believe, however, that great jealousy of the senate pervaded both the populace and the soldiers. The senators were reputed Galba's friends: they had chosen him of their own free will; but Otho they had only accepted. The soldiers had created the present emperor, and they were ready to believe that the senators were intriguing against him. A cohort stationed at Ostia happened to be summoned to the city; its equipments were to be conveyed in waggons for distribution to the men in their new quarters; but this was done by chance at night, and in an unusual way; and suddenly the men took alarm, conceived a notion that their arms were to be taken from them to furnish a band of senatorian conspirators, and, seizing horses, rushed tumultuously to Rome, and penetrated to the gates of the palace. Otho at the moment was entertaining a party of nobles: the soldiers stormed at the gates, without a leader, without a banner, exclaiming that they were come to protect their emperor from the designs of his treacherous parasites. The guests were in consternation: the first impulse on their part was to apprehend treachery from their host. When he desired them to withdraw, they made their way as they best could to their homes: scarcely had they quitted the chamber before the doors were burst in, and the furious mob demanded Otho to be presented to them. Some officers they wounded, others they threatened, till the emperor himself leaped upon a couch, and from thence, regardless of the military indecorum, expostulated and reasoned with his manipulars. With great difficulty they were persuaded to return to their quarters. The next day the alarm had penetrated through the whole city; houses were shut, the streets were deserted; the people were in dismay, the soldiers anxious and uneasy. The prefect finally composed the disturbance by promising a largess of five thousand sesterces to each of the mutineers; after which Otho ventured to enter their quarters, and, with the support of their officers, demanded two only of the most violent for punishment. The current of feeling, already checked by the

Otho's soldiers  
suspect the  
senators of  
treachery.



promised donative, was completely turned by this show of moderation, and the soldiers congratulated themselves on the magnanimity of their leader, who could thus temper justice with mercy.<sup>1</sup>

The spirits of Otho himself were roused by the perils of the crisis, and he displayed activity, vigour, readiness, and decision, which no doubt amazed the men who had known him hitherto only as a showy profigate. But all other classes were paralyzed with alarm. The senators, made thus rudely sensible of the soldiers' feelings toward them, became more servile to the emperor, more profuse in their adulation, more vehement in denouncing his enemy; yet all the while they knew that Otho, so lately one of themselves, was not deceived by this show of devotion, and apprehended that he was storing up an account of vengeance, whenever he should be free to direct against them the fury of the soldiers which he was now nursing against the adversary in the field.<sup>2</sup> The people were disturbed by a thousand terrors, real and imaginary. They heard that Vitellians were among them, intriguing with both the citizens and the soldiers; they distrusted every report, whether of successes or disasters; they were scared by the rumour of prodigies, the dropping of the reins from the hands

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 80–82.; Plutarch, *Otho*, 3.; Dion, lxiv. 9. That the senate was really hostile to Otho there can be no doubt. It was both alarmed and mortified by the way in which, while pretending to rely on its authority, he coquetted with the soldiers and the populace.

It is well known that few, if any, genuine specimens of a brass (senatorial) coinage of this emperor exist; and this has been supposed to indicate that that body, in its ill-will to him, refused to stamp his name and countenance. Eckhel, after refuting this and other explanations of the fact, acknowledges that he can offer no probable solution of it. It is allowed, however, that there are a great number of brass Galbas extant; and I would suggest, that as the senate, perhaps in the excess of its zeal for the destroyer of Nere, made a large issue of this coinage, there would be little opportunity for a fresh mintage during the few months of Otho's power. It may be observed, moreover, that the Vitellian brasses also are comparatively rare. See Eckhel, *Doct. Numm.* vi. 305.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 85.: "Et privato Othoni nuper, atque eadem dicenti, nota adulatio."

of a marble Victory, the turning of Cæsar's statue from west to east; and finally, a terrible inundation of the Tiber seemed an omen of worse disasters. When the force of the waves, which had undermined many houses, was abated, they still kept possession of the Campus and the Flaminian Way; and it was remarked as an evil augury that when Otho first led his cohorts out of the city, he was impeded in his march northward by the waters themselves, or by the ruins they had created.<sup>1</sup>

While the Priests and Flamens, the Salii and the Vestals, with the mighty mob of Rome in their train, conducted a lustral procession round the pomærium, the emperor was meditating the plan of his campaign, with the view of turning the flank of the

Otho's distrust  
of his own offi-  
cers.

invaders already hovering on the Alps. The naval force at Ostia was warmly attached to him, for he had caressed the remnant of Nero's marines after the chastisement they had suffered from Galba, constituting them a regular corps for the land service, which was reputed more honourable than their own. The men now to be employed on board ship might hope for similar advancement; for it was Otho's plan to equip an armament first for the recovery of the Narbonensis, and eventually for operations in the rear of the Vitellian expedition.<sup>2</sup> Some city cohorts and some battalions of the guard were added to the marine force; on the latter especial reliance was placed, and their officers were employed to watch the emperor's generals not less than to assist them. Nothing indeed showed more clearly the precariousness of Otho's position than the precautions he was obliged to take against the very men whom he charged with his defence. Though he enjoyed the services of Suetonius, the greatest captain of the times, together with other men of vigour and conduct, he deemed it necessary to set Proculus, the præto-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 86.; Plut. *Otho*, 4.

<sup>2</sup> The expression of Tacitus, "*spe honoratoris in posterum militia*," is the same as that of Livy, xxxii. 23.; from which it appears that the legionary service was considered of a higher grade than the marine.

rian prefect, a mere policeman without military experience, as a spy over them, with instructions to foment their jealousies and secure their fidelity to himself by divisions among one another. Finally, a freedman, named Oscus, seems to have been set as a spy over Proculus.<sup>1</sup>

But Otho was too active and high-spirited himself to trust entirely to his marines or his soldiers, to his generals or his freedmen. He led his land forces in person, and required the magistrates and the consulars to attend him, not as combatants, for which many of them by age and habit were unfit, but as companions, in order to secure their persons and remove them from the city. Otho indeed was studiously mild in the treatment even of those whose intrigues he had most reason to apprehend. He was satisfied with commanding Lucius, a brother of Aulus Vitellius, to accompany him to the field, treating him with the same courtesy as others. It is pleasant also to read, as an unusual feature in civil war, that he extended his protection to his opponent's children, who were left in the city, and whom their father had no means of protecting but by a threat of reprisals on Titianus, Otho's brother, for Otho himself was wifeless and childless. But, surrounded as he was by a gay and unwarlike nobility, vain of the softness of their manners, of their beauty, their dress, and their equipments, the emperor himself, long known as a mere dissolute fop, suddenly threw off the habits of his past life, and embraced without a murmur all the austerities of service; clad in steel, unwashed, uncombed, he marched on foot at the head of his columns, as if to belie beforehand the sarcasm of the satirist, that he waged a civil war with a mirror in his knapsack.<sup>2</sup> His forces indeed were slender, consisting chiefly of the prætorians and marines, and his preparations had probably been retarded by want of money, while the population suf-

Otho marches  
at the head of  
his troops.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* i. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Contrast the description in Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 11.: "horridus, incomptus famæque dissimilis," with the well-known sarcasm of Juvenal, ii. 103.:

"Speculum civilis sarcina belli."

ferred from the seizure of all the specie that could be collected, and it was now too late to occupy the passes of the Alps and confine the Vitellians to the Gaulish provinces. Cæcina had entered the Cisalpine, and Valens was hastening to join him; but Otho's fleet had thrown garrisons into the strong places along the coast-road, and four legions were advancing with rapid strides from Illyricum, to turn the head of the Adriatic. Five cohorts of prætorians, some squadrons of cavalry, and a body of two thousand gladiators, were sent forward to seize the fords and bridges of the Po; and the Othonians hoped to choose their own positions in the plains on which the enemy was to be met, and the empire to be lost or won.<sup>1</sup>

While the main forces on both sides were converging from many quarters to the centre of the Padane valley, the skirmishes which occurred elsewhere were of little real importance. Otho's fleet, after provoking by wanton plunder the natives of the Ligurian coast, began to harass the shores of Gaul, and Valens was induced by the cries of the Foro-Julians to detach some cohorts for their protection. Troops were landed from the vessels, and various actions took place with no serious result. Corsica was easily persuaded to side with the masters of the sea; but its governor was at private feud with Otho, and tried to secure it for Vitellius. His efforts were nearly crowned with success, but the people rose at last against him, put him to death, and sent his head, in token of their fidelity, to Otho, who, however, was too much occupied with greater matters to reward or acknowledge it.<sup>2</sup>

Operations of  
Otho's fleet on  
the Ligurian  
coast.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 12-15. After the event it was objected that Otho had set out too precipitately: "expeditionem impigre atque etiam præpropere inchoavit." Suet. *Otho*, 8. Evil auspices of course were recorded, and it was particularly remarked that he had neglected to make the solemn display of the Ancilia, without which no military enterprise had ever succeeded. The month of March was appointed for this ceremony, after which, accordingly, the military season commenced. See the commentators on Suetonius. Otho set out on the day of Cybele, the 24th of March (ix. kal. April.)

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 16. *Agric.* 7

By the time that Otho's forces arrived on the southern bank of the Po, the Transpadane region westward of the Addua, the most flourishing district of Italy as it was regarded in the time of Tacitus, had fallen into the hands of the Vitellians. A few flying squadrons of Othomians, which had crossed the river, had been cut off by the invaders.<sup>1</sup> The Vitellians were elated with this success, and their Batavian horse dashed into the stream, and secured an easy passage for Cæcina's foremost columns. Placentia, a place of strength, was held for Otho by Vestricius Spurinna. At first he was unable to restrain the impetuosity of his men, who rushed of their own accord to meet the enemy; but the labour of digging the trenches for their encampment at night damped the ardour of this indolent police, and as Cæcina advanced they retreated hastily behind their walls. The Vitellians, on their part, disdained to form a regular siege; the contempt in which the veterans held Otho's marines and gladiators, urged them to rush to the assault. In the course of this attack the amphitheatre outside the city, the largest building of the kind in Italy, but constructed apparently of wood, was consumed by fire, which the Placentians ascribed to the spite of some of their own neighbours. However this may be, the assault was unsuccessful, and Cæcina was obliged to withdraw beyond the Po, to await the arrival of Valens, who was retarded by insubordination in his camp, and by the necessity of detaching a part of his forces for the defence of the Narbonensis. The Othomians meanwhile collected in greater strength, and, having crossed the river at a lower point, established themselves at Bedriacum, at the junction of the Oglio and the Chiese, commanding the road from Cremona to Verona on the one side, and Mantua on the other. The temper of the troops about to be opposed to each other differed considerably. On the Vitellian side the two leaders were thoroughly earnest in their enterprise; they were

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 17.: "Capta Pannoniorum cohors apud Cremonam. Inter septi centum equites ac mille classici inter Placentiam Ticinumque."

engaged in a revolt beyond hope of pardon, and success was necessary for them; but their forces could much less be relied on, formed as they were by the union of many nations under one banner, with no personal interest in their chiefs or their party, and little else to animate them but the natural ferocity of trained swordsmen, and the lust of plunder. It was difficult to maintain their discipline, and every day relaxed the bands of their obedience. Otho's soldiers, on the other hand, were inspired by very different motives. The prætorians had to defend an emperor of their own choice; to maintain their sudden claim to bestow the purple; to retain their prescriptive right to favours and largesses; to acquire a reputation in the field, and throw off the degrading name of a mere police. The gladiators were emulous of the fame of the legionaries: the legionaries of Illyricum thirsted to measure swords with the conquerors of Germany and Britain. But, ardent as they were for the fight, their want of discipline and mutual confidence caused great disquietude to the old soldiers their commanders. Suetonius was dismayed at the rawness of the levies he was expected to lead to victory, and urged delay.<sup>1</sup> His colleagues, however, Marius Celsus, Proculus, and Gallus, shrewd competitors for Otho's favour, were jealous of him and of one another. The emperor could only settle their disputes by calling Titianus from the city, and placing him over them all; and thus assured of at least one faithful officer, and wearied with the discord of those around him, he impatiently waived all cautious counsels, and gave the signal for attack.<sup>2</sup>

It is no reflection on Otho's courage that he abstained from leading his own armies. He was conscious that he had no military experience, yet the imperator of the legions could not yield the place of general to a

Battle of Bedriacum.

<sup>1</sup> Besides the chief in command, there was another Suetonius in the Othonian army, tribune of the Thirteenth legion. This was Suetonius Lenis, the father of the biographer of the Cæsars, who has himself recorded the fact, adding that he derived from him some interesting particulars of the emperor's last hours. Suet. *Otho*, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii 33.

lieutenant in the field. He retired to Brixellum, on the right bank of the Po, to receive the fresh troops which were rapidly arriving, and organize them for the campaign; but he left his legates to fight the battle which he hoped would decide it at a blow. This division, however, of forces, which were not too numerous to be kept together in one body, still more this retirement of the chief himself from the head of his own army, seems to have been fatal to the cause. The men were disturbed and discouraged, and the movements of their leaders became more than ever vacillating and uncertain. Against the advice of Suetonius, Proculus and Titianus insisted on advancing from Bedriacum; they fixed their camp at the fourth milestone on the road to Cremona, but pleading the urgent commands of Otho himself, they marched sixteen miles further, to the confluence of the Po and the Addua. Their object seems to have been to interrupt the operations of Cæcina, who was throwing a bridge across the Po, with the intention, apparently, of outflanking them, and attacking Otho at Brixellum. A parley took place between him and some of their officers: it was interrupted by an order from Valens to attack; the Vitellians issuing from their camp were severely handled; again they recovered themselves, and the Othonians in their turn suffered from the indecision or the treachery of their leaders. On a false report that the Vitellians had abandoned their emperor, they grounded arms, and saluted them as friends: undeceived by a fiercer onset, they defended themselves with desperation, but with little order, here and there, in the groves and vineyards, by groups or maniples. Those who retained their footing on the causeway kept more solid array; here there was no distant fighting with arrows or javelins; even the pilum was thrown aside, and the opposing bands, rushing furiously together, thrust with the shield, and smote with the sword, till the ground was gained or lost by sheer strength of arm and courage. The vicissitudes of the fray were rapid, various, and indecisive. While numbers remained equal, valour and strength were equally balanced.

But suddenly Otho's generals lost heart and fled. At the same moment the Vitellians were supplied with reinforcements; they charged with redoubled vigour, and broke the ranks of their disconcerted opponents. The smooth straight road tempted the worsted battalions to flight, and, hotly pressed and cut up as they fled,—for none cared to capture men who could not be sold as slaves,—they hurried without a rally towards Bedriacum. Suetonius and Proculus had already passed straight through the lines, nor halted to attempt their defence. Titianus and Celsus exerted themselves with more spirit to stop the fugitives, and rallied a handful of men under the shelter of the entrenchments, which they closed and guarded through the night. The Vitellians drew up at the fifth milestone, that is, when they came in sight of the Othonian camp, which they were not furnished with engines to assault: they lay down to rest on the spot, without pausing to fortify themselves; and the Othonians were too weary or too terrified to molest them. The next morning the beaten army treated for a capitulation; their envoys were favourably received, and the gates were immediately opened. The soldiers fell sobbing into one another's arms; friends and brothers tended each other's wounds. All denounced in common the wickedness of civil war; some even returned to the field to bury the bodies of their fallen kinsmen; but the feelings of religion or humanity extended to a few only, and the greater number of the dead long lay uncared for.<sup>1</sup>

Otho awaited the result of the battle at Brixellum with a mind equally composed to good or evil tidings. The first uncertain rumours of defeat were confirmed by the fugitives from the field, and great as the disaster was, it may be supposed that they rather

Defeat of the  
Othonians.

Otho declines  
to continue the  
contest, and  
commits sui-  
cide.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 41–45. Plutarch, who seems to have followed Tacitus, or at least to have used the same authorities, remarks on the great number of the slain, because none were interested in making prisoners. He had himself traversed the battle-field, and been told by one who had shared the fortunes of the beaten army, of the lofty pile of corpses which was raised upon it. Plut. *Otho*, 14.



enhanced than extenuated it. Nevertheless the legions which had not been engaged were not dismayed at the occurrence. Without waiting for the emperor's exhortation, they thronged of their own accord around him, and urged him to prove their valour in the recovery of his fortunes. Plotius Firmus, the prefect of the prætorians, seconded their clamorous importunities. He showed how strong the resources of their party still were, and pointed to the legions which were even now advancing to join them, which had already announced their arrival at Aquileia, and declared the courage which animated them. A common soldier drew his sword in the emperor's presence, and exclaiming, *This is the devotion which animates us all*, plunged it into his own bosom.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that Otho was possessed of ample means for continuing the contest. But he had determined otherwise. His life had been a feverish pursuit, first of pleasure, and afterwards of power. Under the influence of a vivid imagination guided by vulgar delusions, not by personal judgment or experience, he had aspired to the heights of human happiness, first in the arms of gorgeous beauty, and again in the purple robe of imperial sovereignty. He had waked from both his dreams almost at the moment when he seemed to realize them; and these visions, as they flitted away from him, left him sobered, but not embittered, disenchanted but not cynical. The world, he was now convinced, was not worth the fighting for: success and victory, fame and honour, were not worth the fighting for: his own life was not worth the fighting for. The sentiment of the noble voluptuary, that they who have enjoyed life the most are often the most ready to quit it, whatever we may think of its justice in general, was never more conspicuously fulfilled than in this example.<sup>2</sup> It is pleasant to believe that the last

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lxiv. 11.; Plut. *Otho*, 15.; Suet. *Otho*, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Byron's *Mazeppa*:—

“And strange to say, the sons of pleasure,  
They who have revelled beyond measure  
In beauty, wassail, wine and treasure,

thoughts of this misguided spirit were for the peace of his country and the safety of his friends, to whom he counselled submission. After refusing to allow a renewal of the contest, after providing as he best could for the bloodless recognition of the emperor whom fortune had designated, congratulating himself that he had set an example of clemency, in sparing the family of Vitellius, which the victor for very shame must follow, Otho laid himself calmly on his couch. A tumult arising outside his tent, in which Virginus was threatened with violence, together with others of the senators, who at their master's bidding were leaving the camp, he rose, and with a few words rebuked and allayed the wrath of his fanatical adherents. As evening closed he called for a cup of water, and for two daggers, of which he chose the sharpest, and laid it under his pillow. At the same time he ordered his attendant to quit the place, and show himself to the soldiers, lest he should be charged, in their intemperate fury, with the deed he was about himself to perpetrate. Assured at last that his friends had got beyond the lines, he lay down, and slept for some hours. At break of day he drew forth his weapon, placed it to his heart, and threw his weight upon it. Nature demanded one groan. The slaves and freedmen in the outer chambers rushed trembling to his side, and with them the prefect Plotius. Otho lay dead with a single wound. He had made one request only, that his body might be consumed immediately, to escape the indignity of exposure and decollation. The prætorians crowded, with shouts and tears, to support the bier, kissing the gaping wound and the hanging hands. The pyre was heaped, and the noble remains laid upon it, and when the flames were kindled some of the soldiers slew themselves on the spot. This barbarous example kindled the emulation of the legionaries, and at Bedriacum, at Placentia, and in other camps, it found many desperate imitators. Finally a modest monument was raised over the em-

Die calm, and calmer oft than he  
Whose heritage was misery."

peror's ashes, such as the conqueror himself would scarcely grudge to an honourable opponent.<sup>1</sup>

Then once again was the empire offered by the soldiers to Virginus, and again did the veteran refuse it. Neither would he undertake, as they next requested him, to confer with Valens and Cæcina on the terms of an arrangement that might satisfy both parties. He judged the cause of Otho and his friends as hopeless as it was unjust, and he would not consent to act in its behalf. They drew their swords, but he was firm in his refusal, and at last only escaped at the back of his tent from their fury. Thus baffled, the troops at Brixellum promised their unconditional submission to the victorious generals, while Flavius Sabinus, the brother of Vespasian, whom Otho had distinguished with high marks of favour, sent the cohorts he commanded to the camp of the Vitellians.<sup>2</sup> Of the senators whom Otho had carried to the seat of war his soldiers were not less jealous than himself, and after the rout of Bedriacum, the troops which attended or guarded them at Mutina, not crediting the account of their chief's disasters, watched them with redoubled vigilance, and at last, when the news was confirmed, scarcely refrained from wreaking their spite upon them. Nor did these unfortunate nobles run much less risk at the hands of the Vitellians, who believed that they had cheered the resistance, and delayed the surrender of their opponents; and this risk was heightened by the imprudence of the decurions of the town, in still offering arms and money, and styling them Conscrip't Fathers;

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 47-50.; Plut. *Otho*, 15-18.; Suet. *Otho*, 10-12.; Dion, lxiv. 11-15. Otho wanted eleven days to complete his 37th year; his reign had lasted ninety-five days: born 28th April, 785, he died 17th April, 822. See Baumgarten-Crusius on Suetonius, c. 11., who explains the apparent error of his author: "tricesimo et octavo setatis anno." Martial expresses the common sentiment of admiration for this Roman end, vi. 32:—

"Sic Cato dum vixit, sane vel Cesare major:

Dum moritur, numquid major Othone fuit?"

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 51.

still more by the daring fiction of a freedman of Nero named Cænus, who at the last moment spread the report of a fresh victory over the invaders.

At Rome in the meantime there was no hesitation, no conflict of opinion. The games of Ceres were being performed in the theatre, and the populace was intent only on the amusement of the hour, when it was announced that Otho was dead, and the prefect Sabinus had required the soldiers in the city to swear to Vitellius. The name of the new emperor was received at once with acclamations, and the people, streaming forth, seized the images of Galba, and bore them crowned with flowers and laurels to the temples, and to the spot where his blood had fallen, which they heaped with chaplets. Such of the senators as were still at home met immediately, and decreed to Vitellius by a single act all the honours and titles which had been dealt out from year to year to his predecessors. Thanks were voted to the Germanic legions. Valens was praised for his dispatches, which affected moderation and respect, but the senators were really more grateful to Cæcina, who had proved his respect by not addressing them at all. Having thus done all in their power to conciliate their new master, they still awaited his arrival with anxiety; for amply as they had satisfied his desires, it might not be in his power to control his terrible soldiery, and visions of plunder, of confiscation or massacre, rose before the eyes of a generation to which the civil wars of Rome were matter of history. The fate which Rome might fear at a distance alighted actually on many districts of Italy; for the fierce warriors of the north, Romans only in name, who had scented their quarry from the Rhine, now fell without remorse on the burghs and colonies. Valens and Cæcina were too criminal, or too ambitious themselves, to check this brutal licentiousness. The soldiers of Otho, it was said, had exhausted Italy; but it was desolated by the ruffians of Vitellius.<sup>1</sup>

The senate accepts Vitellius as emperor with acclamation.

The Italian cities plundered by Vitellius.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 55 56.

Meanwhile Vitellius had been collecting his troops in Gaul, or advancing leisurely in the rear of his legates, indulging at this crisis of his affairs the natural indolence of his disposition, sluggish and indifferent, without pride or ambition, with no thought beyond the morrow, yet all the more subject to be worked on by cool intriguers and led into sudden excesses of cruelty or violence. He carried with him eight thousand of the levies which had been destined to reinforce the army in Britain, besides the strength of the Gallic and Germanic legions. Scarcely had he put himself in motion, when the news of the victory at Bedriacum and the death of Otho reached him. At the same time the accession of the Mauretanian provinces was announced, an increase of military strength amounting to nineteen cohorts and five squadrons of horse, together with a numerous corps of native auxiliaries. About the events by which this advantage accrued to him, the rising of the prætor Albinus for his rival, the frustration of this man's attempt on Spain, his flight and slaughter, Vitellius made no inquiry: he was too thoughtless to pay attention to the details of his affairs. He descended the gentle current of the Saône in a barge, while his troops marched along the bank; though secure of his conquest, he did not all at once assume the pomp of sovereignty. He had quitted Rome a bankrupt; and he was returning poor and squalid as he came; till Junius Blæsus, the prefect of the Lugdunensis, a man of wealth and magnificence, invested him with the ensigns of empire. Vitellius seems to have felt this officious zeal as a slur on his own torpidity, and resented rather than approved it. At Lugdunum he was met by Valens and Cæcina, together with the chiefs of the conquered party. Now at last he awoke, and understood that he was actually emperor. From his tribunal he distributed thanks and praises, and commanded the army to salute his infant son as heir to the purple. He associated the child in his own title of Germanicus.<sup>1</sup> Some cruel executions followed, and the

Vitellius advances through Gaul into Italy.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 59. It must be remarked, however, that Galeria, the wife

Illyrian legions, which had ranged themselves on the side of Otho, were exasperated by the slaughter of more than one of their officers. The dissensions between the various corps grew daily wider. Suetonius and Proculus sought to secure the conqueror's regard by alleging their own treachery to Otho, which he affected to believe, and after some delay and contumelious treatment, pretended to receive them into favour. Titianus was pardoned, ostensibly from respect for his fraternal affection; at all events he deserved well for his forbearance towards Galeria and her children. Marius Celsus was suffered to retain the consulship. The vengeance of Vitellius, by whatever motives it was influenced, fell generally upon lesser victims.<sup>1</sup>

Feelings, indeed, of sympathy for human suffering, or respect for human life, were as alien from Vitellius as from his class generally. On the removal of so large a portion of the Roman garrisons, a Gaul named Vitellius generally indulgent towards his enemies. Maricus, raised a revolt among his countrymen.

He pretended to be a god, immortal and invulnerable. But he was captured and given up by the Ædui, and ruthlessly cast forth to be devoured in the arena. When by some chance the beasts refused to touch him; and his trembling votaries were almost reassured, Vitellius looked on coolly while a gladiator despatched him. But he was too careless, it would appear, to grasp at money, and for money the massacres of the civil wars had generally been perpetrated. Vitellius not only spared his enemies' lives, but allowed the

of Vitellius, had been left behind at Rome with her children, while another son by a former wife, Petronia, named Petronianus, was grown up at this time, if still alive. Suetonius, indeed, says that Vitellius had murdered him (*Vitell.* 6.); but whether this be true or not, there seems to be some mistake in the statement of Tacitus.

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius assures us (c. 10.) that Vitellius put to death a hundred and twenty persons who were found, from papers discovered in Otho's hands, to have claimed a reward for the slaughter of Galba. The most distinguished victim of this revolution was a Dolabella, who was charged with attempting to revive Otho's faction in his own behalf. He was slain, under atrocious circumstances, at Interamnium. See Tac. *Hist.* ii. 63, 64.

wills of such as had fallen in the field to take effect for the benefit of their relations. His interests seemed to centre in the gratification of an inordinate <sup>gluttony his prevailing passion.</sup> and as he marched slowly along, all Italy, from sea to sea, was swept for delicacies for his table. If he did not confiscate his enemies' estates to lavish them on his followers, he allowed his followers to indemnify themselves by plundering enemies or friends. Even after the harvests reaped by two preceding armies, enough, it seems, remained to satisfy a third, to generate a complete relaxation of discipline, and impress the soldier with avowed contempt for his emperor. The edicts Vitellius sent before him were sufficiently moderate. He waived for the present the title of Augustus, and positively refused that of Cæsar. He ordered the diviners, the favourites and accomplices of Otho and Nero, to be expelled from Italy, and forbade the knights to disgrace their order by descending on the arena, a practice which had spread from Rome itself even to towns in the country.<sup>1</sup> The conduct of Galeria the wife, and Sertilia the mother, of the new emperor, might help to reassure the minds of the better class. Both these matrons were examples of moderation in prosperity. Sertilia looked with distrust on her son's extraordinary advancement, refusing all public honours herself, and replying to the letter in which he first addressed her by his new appellation, that she had borne a Vitellius, and not a Germanicus. But this high-minded woman died shortly after, and some insinuated that her son had starved her to death, because it had been predicted that he would reign long if he survived his parent: others that he had given her poison at her own request,

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii, 62. The mathematici were ordered to quit Italy by the kalends of October. They revenged themselves by posting a placard, in which they intimated that Vitellius himself should quit the world ("ne usquam esset") before that day. Suet. *Vitell.* 15. Vitellius, however, did not die till the end of December. Dion (*lrv.* 1.) declares that the exact day was predicted, but prudently abstains from citing the date fixed by the decree.

through dread of impending reverses.<sup>1</sup> Such are the kind of stories, improbable and inconsistent with one another, of which much of our history, if it be written at all, must now consist.

But already Vitellius, or at least his shrewder advisers, began to feel the perils of his position, tossed as he was on the waves of so many conflicting tides of military insurrection. The Illyrian legions he had already mortified; but he could not suffer the prætorians to retain their usurped authority, and it was necessary to disband them.<sup>2</sup> The Fourteenth legion, which had fought for Otho at Bedriacum, and refused to admit that it had been worsted, was burning to avenge the disgrace incurred from the event of a few trifling skirmishes. This division had been recalled from Britain by Nero, and thither it was now ordered to return. The First legion of marines was drafted into Spain. The Eleventh and Seventh were sent at the commencement of summer into winter quarters. The Thirteenth was employed in the erection of amphitheatres at Cremona and Bononia, where Cæcina and Valens proposed to amuse the soldiers with gladiatorial shows.

Discharge of the prætoriana, and disposal of the Othonian legions.

The advance of Vitellius still continued to be marked by excesses and horrors of various kinds. At Ticinum, the dis-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Vitell.* 14. As we come near to the time of Suetonius, the retailer of these and similar rumours, the domestic history of the Cæsars becomes less trustworthy than ever. He could now only relate the anecdotes of the day, not yet sifted and sanctioned by any standard authority. The death of Sextilia is mentioned by Tacitus without intimating that any suspicion attached to it. See *Hist.* iii. 67.: "Erat illi fessa etate parens, quæ tamen, paucis ante diebus, opportuna morte excidium domus prævenit, nihil principatu filii adsecuta nisi lucrum et bonam famam." Comp. *Hist.* ii. 64.: "Sextilia . . . antiqui moris . . . domus suæ tantum adversa sensit."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 67.: "Addito honestæ missionis lenimento arma ad tribunos suos deferebant." The historian adds that at the next outbreak of civil war these reckless soldiers, who it may be supposed had continued to linger in the city, offered their services to the opponent of Vitellius.



Military disturbance at Ticinum.

ruption of the bands of discipline was more than ever apparent. The emperor lay down to supper with Virginius by his side. The legates and tribunes thronged to his orgies. Outside the imperial tent, centurions and soldiers emulated the dissipation of their chief. Drunkenness and disorder reigned throughout the night. A Gaul and a Roman happened to challenge one another to wrestle; the legionary fell, the auxiliary mocked him; his comrades flew to arms, and two auxiliary cohorts were cut to pieces. Battle would have raged throughout the lines, but for a seasonable alarm. The return of the Fourteenth legion was announced, with swords drawn, and standards advanced, and an attack on the camp was apprehended by the intoxicated mob within it. The alarm was false; but, while it lasted, a slave of Virginius was seized, and charged with the purpose of killing the emperor. The

Narrow escape of Virginius.

death of Virginius was now loudly demanded by the soldiers around the tent. Vitellius, indeed, had the firmness to refuse them; he could not afford to sacrifice so brave and honest a friend. This was the third escape of Virginius, and the great age he eventually attained in peace and honour, made the risks of his early years the more worthy of remark.<sup>1</sup>

From Ticinum Vitellius proceeded to Cremona, and there witnessed the contests of Cæcina's gladiators. Thence he

Brutality of Vitellius on the Field of Bedriacum.

diverged from his route to cross the plain of Bedriacum, and beheld the scene of his victory, still reeking with the fumes of Roman slaughter. The curiosity with which he examined the spot and listened

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 68. Virginius survived to his 83rd year, A. D. 97. The younger Pliny records the lines which he directed to be engraved on his tomb, *Ep.* vi. 10., ix. 19.:

"Hic situs est Rufus, pulso qui Vindice quondam  
Imperium asseruit non sibi, sed patriæ."

They seem to contradict the statement of the historian, that Virginius and Vindex had come to a mutual understanding. This was the tradition to which Juvenal also refers:

"Quid enim Virginius armis  
Debit ulcisci magis, aut cum Vindice Galba."

to the details of the bloody fray, shocked the narrators of his history : he showed no remorse for the death of so many of his countrymen, nor horror at the sight of their remains. Some, indeed, declared that he expressed a brutal pleasure at the scene ; *the corpse of an enemy*, he said, *smells always well, particularly of a citizen*. Nevertheless, he fortified his stomach with draughts of wine, and distributed it largely among his soldiers. Tacitus himself, the most temperate or least fanciful of our authorities, allows that he sacrificed on the field to the *Divinities of the spot*.<sup>1</sup>

The shows of Valens at Bononia were celebrated with unusual pomp, the whole apparatus of imperial luxury being brought for the purpose from Rome, and with it the worthless instruments of Nero's debaucheries, the dancers, singers, and eunuchs, with whom Vitellius had become familiar in the court of the

He is with difficulty withheld from entering Rome as an armed conqueror.

tyrant. As he approached the city the stream of application for places and favours met him with accumulated force ; it was necessary to abridge the short tenure of the designated consuls to make room for more competitors, and some, who might be expected to put up with an affront, were excluded altogether. The news which now arrived of the adhesion of the Syrian legions dispelled all alarm, and gave the rein to every evil passion. The emperor and the army, with no fear of Vespasian before them, might indulge themselves without restraint. Vitellius would have entered Rome in the garb of war, cloaked and booted, at the head of his troops, with colours flying and trumpets blowing. Such arrogance would have been unparalleled : such flagitiousness would have been a prodigy. Citizens of every rank stood aghast at this vision of foreign invasion descried dimly in the distance ; but the emperor's friends interposed at the last moment, and at the Milvian bridge he consented to lay down his military ensigns, and traversed the streets in the civil *prætexta*, the soldiers following with sheathed swords.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 70. Comp. Suet. *Vitell.* 10. ; Dion, lxx. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Tac. *Hist.* ii. 89. with Suet. *Vitell.* 11. The account of the former is undoubtedly to be preferred.

## CHAPTER LVII.

ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF VESPASIAN.—HE IS RECOMMENDED TO THE SYRIAN LEGIONS BY MUCIANUS, AND PROCLAIMED EMPEROR IN THE EAST.—MUCIANUS ADVANCES TOWARDS ITALY, WHILE VESPASIAN OCCUPIES EGYPT.—DISGRACEFUL CONDUCT OF VITELLIUS AT ROME.—HE IS ABANDONED OR FEELY SUPPORTED BY HIS PARTISANS.—HIS FORCES DEFEATED AT BEDRIACUM.—ANTONIUS PRIMUS CROSSES THE APENNINES.—VITELLIUS OFFERS TO RESIGN THE EMPIRE, BUT IS PREVENTED BY HIS SOLDIERS.—THE CAPITOL ATTACKED BY THE VITELLIANS AND BURNED.—PRIMUS FORCES HIS WAY INTO ROME.—VITELLIUS SEIZED AND SLAIN.—VESPASIAN ACCEPTED AS EMPEROR.—MUCIANUS CONDUCTS THE GOVERNMENT DURING HIS ABSENCE.—STATE OF AFFAIRS AT ROME.—COMMENCEMENT OF THE RESTORATION OF THE CAPITOL.—SUPERSTITIOUS REVERENCE PAID TO THE FLAVIAN FAMILY.—PRETENDED MIRACLES OF VESPASIAN AT ALEXANDRIA.—HE REACHES ROME.—A. D. 69, 70. A. U. 822, 823.

**T**ITUS FLAVIUS VESPASIANUS, whose career we are now to follow, has already been mentioned as an object of jealousy to Otho, and again to Vitellius; as the man, however, whose rumoured  
Origin and career of Vespasian.adhesion to the latest revolution seemed to establish the usurpation of the adventurer from Germany. The origin of this redoubted soldier was obscure: his family belonged to the Sabine burgh of Reate, and had never risen to public honours. Vespasian had no illustrious images in the modest hall of his fathers. Arrived, at the period now before us, at the advanced age of sixty, he had passed the most active portion of life in a variety of important services.<sup>1</sup> The favour of Narcissus had given him a legion in Britain, where, as we have seen, he had performed some notable exploits,

<sup>1</sup> Vespasian was born at Phalacrine, a village near Reate; but his grand-



the forces soon to be called into action there. His temper was prone to superstition.<sup>1</sup> His advance had been hitherto signal; he felt confidence in his own abilities, and believed himself a favourite of fortune; he was surrounded, like every Roman in high station abroad, by flatterers, who nourished every thought of pride or vanity, and, amidst a nation of fanatics, prophets were not wanting to apply to the renowned Vespasianus the omens which were supposed popularly to point to a Jewish deliverer and Messiah. The successes he gained in his first encounters with the Jews encouraged him to brood over these shadowy intimations; and, when he visited the summit of Mount Carmel to sacrifice to the deity of the spot, the priests declared, on inspecting the entrails, that whatever he was purposing, whether it were to build a house, to buy an estate, or to increase his family of slaves, the mansion should be ample, the property vast, the number of his dependents unusually great. His attendants, aware of the ideas he was beginning to harbour, spread this oracular sentence far and near, and the eyes of the soldiers and provincials were turned more freely and fixed more devoutly upon the sturdy veteran than ever. To Nero, to Galba, to Otho, as they appeared successively on the scene, he frankly offered his own and his soldiers' obedience; but with every change of dynasty, his submission to the choice of the capital was more and more shaken, and he was strongly affected by the silence with which the oath he tendered to Vitellius was received by the troops he commanded.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless Vespasian, with the discretion which became his years and experience, was not lightly moved to enter the field against the chief accepted at Rome. Besides his own fortunes, those of two sons—Titus and Domitianus, the one already launched in the career of public service, the other just entering upon it—trembled in the balance, and he hesitat-

Vespasian recommended to the Syrian legions, and proclaimed emperor at Alexandria by the prefect of Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> Aurelius Victor says of him: "Simul divinis deditus, quorum vera plerisque negotiis compererat." *Cesar. 9.*

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist. l. 74.*

ed to expose their brilliant prospects to the chances of a military revolution. He well knew, as a general, the valour of the Germanic forces, with which he had himself served: perhaps he remembered that, at least since the times of Sulla, the forces of the East had never measured themselves with success against the hardier warriors of the Western world. The governor of Palestine, moreover, was dependent on the higher authority and wider command of the Syrian proconsul. Vespasian would shrink from the call of public favour while Mucianus still adhered to the new emperor, however loose and reluctant such an adherence might be. But when Mucianus himself urged him to the enterprise, and offered all the weight of his support, hesitation would be merely pusillanimous. After several private conferences to which he was invited on the borders of his province, the proconsul led him to the cantonments of the Syrian army, and recommended his cause to its support. He was received with enthusiasm. Men and officers, impatient at the superior fortune of their rivals in the West, exulting perhaps in the prospect of returning in triumph to Italy, vied with one another in urging their favourite to action, while he still cautiously restrained them from saluting him with the irrevocable title of Emperor. Mucianus returned to Antioch to complete his preparations; Vespasian himself in his own head-quarters at Cæsarea. Tiberius Alexander, Nero's prefect in Egypt, declared for the new competitor; thus securing the flank of his position in Palestine, assuring the maintenance of his troops in the East, and threatening Rome itself with the loss of its most plenteous storehouse. The prefect, indeed, was the first to invite his soldiers to proclaim Vespasian emperor: it was from the first of July, the day of this solemn inauguration at Alexandria, that the annals of the new principate were afterwards dated.<sup>1</sup> The Judean legions followed, on the third of the same month, with the ardour of a common instinct. The

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 29.; Suet. *Vesp.* 6. The second date (v. non. Jul.) is taken from Tacitus, and is preferable to that given by Suetonius (v. Id. Jul., i. e. the 11th.)

word Emperor was first dropped, as it were, by accident. it was immediately caught up, passed from rank to rank, and finally ratified by the unanimous acclamations of the whole army. The titles of Cæsar and Augustus were speedily added. Mucianus was prepared for action. As soon as the report arrived at Antioch, he proposed the oath to his legions there, and, proceeding to the theatre, harangued the people fluently in Greek, with a grace which charmed them; to the soldiers he represented that Vitellius had resolved to quarter his Gauls and Germans in the luxurious stations of Syria, and transfer to the savage North the troops which had revelled so long in the pleasures of Asia. The provincials were terrified at the prospect of this settlement of barbarians among them; the soldiers were not only alarmed but exasperated.<sup>1</sup>

By the 15th of July all the legions of Syria and the eastern frontier had pledged themselves to the new aspirant.

Preparations  
of Vespasian  
for contesting  
the empire.

They were supported by the vassals or allies of the empire; by Sohemus, king of Ituræa; by Antiochus, king of Commagene; by Agrippa, a younger son of Herod, the nominal sovereign of some petty districts of Palestine, long retained at Rome, whence he had managed, on the news of the impending revolution, to escape to his own dominions; and by his sister Berenice, queen of Chalcis, intriguing and beautiful, and in favour with Vespasian, old as he was. From Achaia to Armenia, all the provinces of the East followed the common impulse, to range the eastern half of the empire against the western. Mucianus summoned his chief adherents to a meeting at Berytus. Money was demanded, levies were ordered, garrisons stationed, magazines and arsenals established. A base was laid for extensive and prolonged operations. Vespasian was full of activity, lavishing exhortations or praises, as each were required; paying court to the senators resident in the province; engaging the Parthians and Armenians to respect the frontiers; laborious, vigilant, discreet in all things; showing

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 74-78.

himself fit to wield the empire by the firmness with which he withheld from the soldiers any extravagant largess. Titus was charged with the conduct of affairs in Judea, while he undertook himself to secure the footing promised him in Egypt. The forces of the East were divided into three armies; one of these was deemed sufficient to confront the legions of Vitellius; the second was destined to control revolt within the frontiers; the third to repress aggression from beyond them. The new emperor made preparations for maintaining the integrity of the empire at the moment when he was bending all his energies to acquire it; such had been the policy which gained favour and admiration for Augustus; *Senate, People, and Gods*, would declare, as of old, for the man who devoted himself to the true interests of the republic; even the præterians would acknowledge him as their legitimate chief, and break their unworthy bondage to a selfish voluptuary.<sup>1</sup>

Mucianus led the van with deliberate and majestic march, neither hurrying forwards, as if anxious or impatient, nor loitering, as if indifferent to success. The strong current swept all lesser bodies into its vortex. Officers, military and civil, Romans and provincials, ships and soldiers, arms and treasures, were all wafted along in a stream of increasing weight and volume. *Money, said Mucianus, is the sinews of civil war.*<sup>2</sup> An invader might throw himself on the enemy's country for support; but the leader of a party must depend on a well-filled military chest. Of his own means he gave largely; but he was not more abstinent than the chiefs of former revolutions in requiring contributions from his adherents, or extorting treasure from the temples and other public sources. The tide of arms rolled away; but the taxes now imposed

Mucianus advances westward and receives powerful support.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 79-83.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 84.: "Eos esse belli *civilis* nervos." We have adopted the phrase as a rhetorical commonplace, applying it to war in general; but our author is more precise. The metaphor, however, had already been employed by Cicero (*Philipp.* v. 2.): "nervi civilis belli pecunia infinita."



by Vespasian's lieutenant were transferred as the legacy of war to the peace which followed; for Vespasian himself, though averse in the first instance to imposing them, was too well satisfied with their returns ever to remit them. And now three Illyrian legions joined; the Third, the Eighth, and the Seventh or Claudian, faithful to Otho as the friend of Nero, and heir to the fortunes of the family from which it derived its title.<sup>1</sup> These legions had advanced as far as Aquileia to fight for their favourite, and on hearing of his death, stoned the bearer of the news, tore the colours which bore the name of Vitellius, sacked the military chest, and impetuously defied the conqueror. They now rejoiced in the opportunity of transferring themselves to Vespasian, and speedily brought over to him two other legions stationed in Pannonia; which were followed by the garrisons of Dalmatia. The seeds of still further defection were scattered by letters to the troops in Spain and Gaul, and particularly to the Fourteenth legion, now sullenly retiring towards Britain.<sup>2</sup>

At the moment that the army in Syria was proclaiming Vespasian emperor, Vitellius was making his entry into Rome, at the head of four legions, twelve squadrons of horse, and thirty-four auxiliary cohorts, a veteran force of sixty thousand men, but corrupted by three months of licence. His first act was to sacrifice in the Capitol, and there he embraced his mother, on whom he pressed the title of Augusta: the next day he harangued the people and senate, in the strain of a foreign conqueror rather than of a citizen, with much ill-merited praise of his own moderation and vigilance. His career, however, in the city was attended from the first with evil omens. The first edict he issued as Chief Pontiff was dated the 15th kalends of August (July 18th), the day of the Allia and Cremera.<sup>3</sup> Yet his behaviour in the Senate-house, the forum,

Conduct of Vitellius at Rome.

The name of Claudian was given, as may be remembered, to this legion as a reward for its zeal in suppressing the revolt of Scribonianus. See above chap. xlix. § 2.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Hist. ii. 85, 86.; Suct. Vesp. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. Hist. ii. 91.; Suct. Vitell. 11.

and the theatre, seems to have been modest and becoming. He was assiduous in attending the discussions of the fathers, even on matters of trifling concern. He suffered himself to be opposed, or was satisfied, if warmly attacked, with invoking the protection of the tribunes. Even then he soon recovered his composure, and would only remark that it was nothing new or strange for two senators to differ; *for his own part*, he would add, *he had sometimes disagreed with Thrasea*. The comparison thus implied between the sage and the profligate, the patriot and the usurper, provoked some bitter derision. But this outward moderation betokened only the easy compliance of his character. Cæcina and Valens, it was soon found, were the real governors of the empire. The chief appointments were all made through their influence, which they exerted with mutual rivalry. They enriched themselves at the same time with the estates and houses both of friends and enemies, while the decrees for restoring their possessions to the recalled exiles were generally allowed to be frustrated. They studied to engross their master in the low debauchery to which he was naturally addicted, while they took the cares of empire off his hands. He passed his days and nights in feasting and sleeping, and while the treasury was empty, and the promised donative could not be discharged, he lavished all the money he could grasp in the indulgence of the coarsest appetites. Within the few months of his power he spent, as was computed, nine hundred millions of sesterces, above seven millions of our money, in vulgar and brutal sensuality.<sup>1</sup> But the sol-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 95.: "Novies millies sestertium paucissimis mensibus intervertisse creditur." The Romans were generally content with a single meal, the *cena*: the slight refectations of the morning and midday, *jentaculum* and *prandium*, were rarely taken in company. But Vitellius had his banquets thrice or four times in the day, adding to the above named, a *comissatio*, or "revel," at night. To the abstemious people of the South such gluttony seemed prodigious; but Vitellius had recourse to the vomit. His brother gave him a supper in which 2000 fishes and 7000 birds were served up. Vitellius had an immense dish made, which he called the "Shield of Minerva," and loaded with peacocks' and pheasants' tongues, and roes of the mullet and *scarus*: his delicacies were

diers, defrauded of their stipulated reward, required other compensation, and they were permitted to range the city freely, and taste its amusements and dissipations, to the ruin of their habits and discipline. The prætorians had been disbanded, and the ordinary police of the city was neglected. The legionaries chose their own quarters at will, and when these rude children of the North stretched their tents on the pleasant but unhealthy slopes of the Vatican, they suffered severely from intemperance in food and bathing, as well as from the malaria of the spot. It became necessary to re-embodify the prætorian and the urban guards. Valens took this important charge on himself to the exclusion of his colleague. He drafted twenty thousand of the legionaries into these favoured bands; but the legions were left thereby not weakened only, but discontented. They were to be gratified in their turn with fresh indulgences. Vitellius conceded to them the execution of three Gaulish nobles who had fought for Vindex; so far back did their animosity reach. The emperor's birthday was celebrated with an immense show of gladiators, and Nero's obsequies were performed in the Campus Martius. The tyrant's body was removed from the sarcophagus in which it had been deposited, and laid on a funeral pyre.<sup>1</sup> The Augustales applied the torch, and the ashes, I presume, of the last of the Julii were finally consigned to the mausoleum of Augustus. The reign of the freedmen recommenced; Asiaticus and Polysetus, such were the names of the creatures of Vitellius, recalled by their avarice and audacity the memory of the favourites of Claudius. The degradation of Rome, hardly awakened from its dream of in-

brought him from the Caspian and the Straits of Gibraltar. Comp. for these and other extravagancies, Suet. *Vitell.* 13.; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxv. 46.; Dion, lrv. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 95.; Suet. *Vitell.* 11. The author quoted by Suidas in voc. Βιτέλλιος, says expressly that the corpse, νεκρός, of Nero, was removed from its original sepulchre. But this sepulchre was not the obscure place he supposes. Suetonius describes it, on the contrary, as a sarcophagus (solum) of porphyry, crowned with an altar-slab of white Carrara marble, and inclosed in a vault of Thasian stone. *Ner.* 50.

dependence, was as complete as it was sudden, and never yet perhaps had she sunk so low in sensuality and licentiousness, as in the few months which followed on the death of Otho.

The spell was broken by the first cry of military defection. The Third legion, it was announced, had revolted, but the whole truth was still withheld from the public ear. Aid was hastily summoned from Spain, Britain, and Germany. But the provinces were unmoved, and the chiefs of the legions hesitated.

*Vitellius is deserted in some quarters, and feebly supported in others.*

Hordeonius pleaded that he was threatened by the Batavi, and could not spare troops; Bolanus, beyond the channel, that he was fully occupied with the defence of his posts on the Trent and Severn. Spain had no chief of consular rank, and her officers were too jealous one of another to take a step in advance. Africa alone responded cheerfully. The indolence of Vitellius had made him a favourite with the troops he had formerly commanded there, whereas Vespasian's strictness had offended them, and they remembered having once pelted him on his tribunal with turnips.<sup>1</sup> The adhesion of the African province was undoubtedly of great importance to balance the defection of Egypt; but in this crisis, when all depended on the strength and number of the allies which could be mustered on either side, the elements themselves conspired against the doomed Vitellius. A long prevalence of north-westerly winds, bore to Greece and Asia intelligence of the movements of the one party, while it withheld from Italy all accounts of the operations of the other. The occupation of Illyricum and Rhætia by Vespasian's adherents, enabled him at the same time to close the communications by land. Vitellius continued long to indulge in fatal security. At last the imminence of danger could not be disguised. Valens and Cæcina were despatched to the north of Italy, and with them marched the languid and broken remnants of the Germanic legions: their ranks were thin; their pace was slow; their arms rusty or decayed; even their horses were

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Vesp.* 4.

out of condition: they shrank from the heat, the dust, and the wind; nor did they bear the restraints of discipline better than the toils of service. Valens lingered some time behind, under the plea of illness: Cæcina, it was believed, already meditated defection; certainly he was jealous of his colleague's influence, and might hope for more consideration under another master. The Vitellian forces were at last assembled in the plains of the lower Po, between Cremona and Ravenna, and there Cæcina began to corrupt the fidelity of the men and their officers, with the aid of Bassus, prefect of the Adriatic fleet, whose influence extended to the marine cohorts, still mindful of Galba's severity, and of Otho's favours.<sup>1</sup>

The three Flavian legions,—such is the title we may give to the adherents of Vespasian,—which had now seized the passes of the Julian Alps, and were preparing to pour down into Italy, were commanded by Antonius Primus. While some of his officers advised delay, to await the arrival of Mucianus, this spirited partisan would listen to no such timid counsels. He was anxious to be the first of his faction in the field. He despised the adversary before him; perhaps he had secret communications with Cæcina. Nevertheless, his strength was much inferior to that of the enemy, and the resolution to rush headlong into the midst of them seems rash and precipitate. But the first engagements that occurred were favourable to the invaders. The outposts of the Vitellians were driven back from the head of the Adriatic. The Flavians crossed the deep and rapid rivers, and turned or carried every fortress, till they arrived before Verona, and spread their numerous and well-appointed cavalry over the broad plains around it. Here indeed Cæcina, it seems, might, if he chose, have overwhelmed them; but he contented himself with issuing manifestos against their chief; nor in these did he exhibit much confidence. Antonius retorted in a bolder strain. He was

Antonius Primus leads Vespasian's forces into Italy.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* ii. 101.

overtaken by letters from Mucianus, rebuking his haste and requiring him to wait for the reinforcements. Vespasian, too, announced that he was in possession of Egypt, and could reduce Vitellius to capitulate, by withholding her supplies from Rome. But Primus retained his confidence, and determined to win the victory alone. The legates of two legions shared his authority, and encumbered his schemes: an opportune revolt of their soldiers, fomented perhaps by himself, enabled him to remove them from the camp, under pretence of providing for their security. He was now sole commander, and eager to push his advantage. The defection of the fleet at Ravenna from Vitellius increased his ardour. Cæcina would have played into his hands, but was prevented from consummating the treachery by his own soldiers; and now both armies prepared for a decisive action on the plain of Bedriacum, where the Vitellians, amidst all their present discouragements, were inspired with the recollection of recent triumph. Left without a general themselves, for they had thrown Cæcina into chains, they were opposed to a bold and able leader, and, as on the former occasion, victory now declared for the army which was best commanded. The Flavians were twice saved from defeat by the energy of Primus; and when at last Cremona fell into their hands, the remnant of the Vitellian legions broke and dispersed in all directions.<sup>1</sup>

And defeats the  
Vitellians at  
Bedriacum.

Cremona was a Roman colony, established as a check upon the Gauls of the Cisalpine, and a barrier against more distant invaders. Well placed on a navigable stream amidst a fertile country, it rapidly increased in numbers and importance; but its wealth had tempted once before the cupidity of a conqueror, and it deserved under the Triumvirs the epithet of *hapless*, which was now to become more terribly appropriate.<sup>2</sup> Unscrupulous as the Romans had ever shown themselves in spoiling foes, or even dependents and allies, they had rarely, even in the worst licence of civil conflict,

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 15-35.; Suet. *Vitell.* 15.; Dion, lxx. 10-15.

<sup>2</sup> Virg. *Ecl.* ix. 28.: "Misere vicina Cremona."

surrendered their own colonies to the fate of war. But the example of Præneste under Sulla was now to be repeated, with at least equal horrors. After a brave defence, the camp of the Vitellians had been forced; the town had capitulated with an assurance of protection. But Primus, as an intriguer and adventurer, had bought the swords of his soldiers by hopes which he had not yet redeemed. They awaited impatiently a word or gesture to commence the work of plunder, possibly they had already commenced it; and when, in taking a bath after the fatigues of the attack, he remarked that the water was not warm enough, the words of the attendant, *It shall soon be hotter*, were caught up by the troops around him, and perverted into an order, or accepted as an omen, for burning the city. Cremona was sacked with every aggravation of cruelty and brutality; her people were abused and slaughtered; her buildings levelled with the ground; one edifice alone, the temple of Mephitis, the deity of the surrounding marshes, escaped the indiscriminate destruction.<sup>1</sup>

*But Vitellius, says Tacitus, after the departure of Cæcina, and presently of Valens, drowned his cares in voluptuousness: he neither collected arms, nor harangued or trained his soldiers, nor showed himself everywhere in public; but burying himself in the shade of his gardens, like those slothful brutes, which, if you give them food, lie still and slumber, left the present, the imminent, and the distant, all in the same forgetfulness.* He was lounging lazily in the groves of Aricia when the defection of his fleet was announced to him, and struck him with consternation. The treachery of Cæcina followed; but in this case his alarm was relieved by learning that the traitor was captured and detained. Nevertheless his spirits were depressed, and all courage and confidence soon failed him. Trembling and suspicious, he was easily impelled to cruelty. To his

Beastiality of  
Vitellius: his  
fears, cruelties,  
and disasters.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 36.: "Umbraculis hortorum abditus, ut ignava animalia, quibus si cibum suggeras, jacent torpentque, præterita, instantia, futura, pari oblivione dimiserat."

fears he sacrificed a man of high distinction, Junius Blæsus, who it seems had allowed himself, in this crisis, to hold a banquet in his house. He was accused of treasonable aspirations. His Junian and Antonian blood were held sufficient to condemn him. Vitellius caused him to be poisoned, then visited and affected to condole with him in his sickness, remarking afterwards that he had feasted his eyes with the sight of a dying enemy. The deed, the motive, and the manner, as reported by common fame, were treasured up by the affronted nobles of Rome; to whose indignation we may perhaps ascribe a part at least of the stories which have stamped Vitellius as the most bestial of tyrants.<sup>1</sup> Valens meanwhile, finding, as he advanced towards the Cisalpine, that the country was in the hands of the Flavians, and perceiving that the reinforcements he brought with him were too few to overcome, too numerous to pass them unperceived, sent on his main body to Ariminum, to do the best they could for themselves; but turned aside himself with a few followers only, crossed the Apennines, and hearing of the capture of Cremona, took ship at Pisæ, intending to throw himself into the Narbonensis, and organize the Vitellians in the province. Adverse winds compelled him to land at the Portus Monæci. The coast was occupied by Valerius Paulinus, a Flavian. The treacherous sea seemed less hostile than the land, and Valens launched again upon the waves. Once more he was driven ashore on the islands called Stœchades, and was made prisoner. The news of these losses spread rapidly through the West, and Spain, Gaul, and Britain declared without reserve in favour of Vespasian.<sup>2</sup>

The withdrawal of numerous battalions from the defence of the frontiers gave the barbarians, in many quarters, an opportunity which they did not fail to seize. In Britain, in Germany, in Dacia, the outposts of the empire were attacked, and the majesty of

Slow and cautious policy of Vespasian.

<sup>1</sup> The charge against Vitellius of setting up Nero openly as his pattern in the empire (see Suet. *Vitell.* 11.), has the air of a senatorial misrepresentation.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 44.



Rome insulted. But of these petty disturbances I will not pause to speak here. The aggressions of the Dacians, which alone could have had any effect in checking the progress of the Flavian generals, were repressed by Mucianus, the victory at Cremona coming opportunely to release one of his legions from the necessity of facing the Vitellians. At the same time, the attention of Vespasian was recalled from his great enterprise by a movement on the far distant shores of the Euxine, and he paused to detach a force to Trapezus, to check the revolt of an ambitious freedman. Success in this quarter, and victory in Italy, were announced to him at the same moment. He hastened his march towards Alexandria, with the avowed purpose of threatening Rome with famine. His plan was to advance from Egypt, by land and sea, into the province of Africa, and grasp both the granaries of Italy. Yet this slow and wary policy was not without its dangers. Amidst the chances of civil war, swiftness of movement is generally the first condition of success. New perils multiply at every step. Foes may be routed, but at the next moment friends may become foes. The triumphs of Primus had already turned his head. He thought the question between the rival emperors decided, and by himself alone. Uncontrolled by a superior on the spot, he acted for himself and his legions as though he were king of Italy, extorting and plundering at his own pleasure, and repelling, not without scorn, the rebukes of Mucianus, while his despatches even to Vespasian were composed in the spirit of an equal rather than a subject. But Primus, adroit as a chief of freebooters in managing the temper of his soldiers, was no match in policy for statesmen and imperators.<sup>1</sup>

Vitellius was still at Rome, still grovelling in his sensuality, refusing even to credit the account of his disasters. He forbade the subject to be discussed, and suppressed, as far as he could, the reports which circulated about it. The Flavian generals sent him

Vitellius puts  
himself at the  
head of his  
troops.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 45-53.

back their prisoners, that he might know the truth from the mouths of actual witnesses. Vitellius saw, interrogated, and immediately executed them. A brave centurion extorted his leave to visit the scene of warfare, and ascertain the state of affairs; but, spurned and insulted on his return by his infatuated chief, he threw himself indignantly on his sword. At last, Vitellius roused himself to despatch fourteen prætorian cohorts, with a legion of marines, and some squadrons of horse, to occupy the passes of the Apennines. He placed his brother Lucius in command of the city, and made some faint efforts to conciliate the nobles by the appointment of consuls for several years forward. At the same time he conferred the Latin privileges upon allies and subjects, reckless of the future condition of the realm which was passing so rapidly from his hands. Finally, he advanced in person, at the impatient demand of his soldiers, to the camp at Mevania, at the foot of the mountains which constituted the last barrier between Rome and the invaders.<sup>1</sup>

But now a fresh mishap befell him. The fleet at Misenum, the guard or convoy of the corn-fleets, revolted: the sailors on board, moreover, were trained to act on land, and they provoked an insurrection against him in Campania. Capua, with its schools of gladiators, held out for Vitellius, while the patrician retreat of Puteoli declared against him. The first officer he sent to check this movement went over, with his forces, to the enemy; and the Flavian partisans, thus increased in strength and numbers, occupied the walls of Tarracina. Vitellius, in dismay and consternation, now drew his troops nearer to Rome, leaving the Apennines open to the enemy, and sought, by frantic promises and entreaties, to induce the senators, the knights, and even the lowest of the citizens, to offer men, arms, and money in aid of his falling fortunes. The news of the rising in Campania roused the Marsians, the Pelignians, and the Samnites.<sup>2</sup> The heart of Italy was more ex-

He suffers reverses and falls back upon Roma.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 54, 55.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 59.: "Erectus Samnis, Pelignusque, et Marsi, emulatione

cated by the personal struggle of two obscure adventurers than by the war of classes in the last age of the republic. The cold and wet of the winter season, which had now set in, was the last ally of Vitellius; and the difficulty with which Antonius at length overcame this mountain barrier, though unopposed, showed how easily the emperor might have checked and perhaps destroyed him in the attempt. But the passage was now effected: the two armies confronted each other in the valley of the Nar. Deserted by their emperor, and without a leader, the Vitellians had no spirit for fighting. The head of Valens, kept some time in custody, and now slain at Urbinum, was exhibited to them: a trophy which awed them into submission. Antonius received them with clemency, and breaking them in two divisions for greater security, was content with setting watch over their movements, and suffered them to retain their arms. He then proceeded to offer terms to Vitellius himself, promising him life, large revenues, and a quiet retreat in Campania, as the reward of submission. These offers were confirmed by Mucianus. Vitellius, stunned by his misfortunes, passively acquiesced. Had not the foe, says Tacitus, remembered that he had once been emperor, he would himself have forgotten it. It is gratifying, however, to find that in the heat of a Roman civil war, one rival could make such assurances of clemency, and the other could confide in them.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless the advent of Primus and his plundering legions was anticipated with horror by the chief citizens.

Their object was to save Rome, whatever else might happen, from the licence of an invading army. Vitellius had retained in the city, observed, but not guarded, the brother and the younger son of his rival. Fear for himself and for his own family, as in Otho's case, had introduced this new feature of

Antonius crosses the Apennines.

Vitellius offers to resign the empire, but is prevented by his soldiers.

quod Campania prævenisset, ut in novo obsequio, ad cuncta belli munia acres erant."

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 60-63.

mercy and consideration into the quarrels of party chiefs. Flavius Sabinus was some years older than Vespasian, the head of their house, and the wealthier of the two. Devoid of personal ambition, and only anxious to spare effusion of blood, he listened willingly to the instances of the nobles, now gathered round him, urging him to assume the lead of his brother's faction, and discuss personally with Vitellius the terms of accommodation. In the temple of Apollo, with one witness from among the chiefs on either side, the transfer of the empire was debated and settled.<sup>1</sup> But, unfortunately, the city was still filled with the fugitives from so many disasters, desperate swordsmen who could not endure the shame of yielding. They muttered in the ears of their trembling chief, that there was no hope of safety for him in a private station. The present danger, however, seemed more terrible than the distant, and he could not be prevailed on to arm again. He issued from the palace, clothed in black, his family in mourning around him.<sup>2</sup> His infant child was borne in a litter. The procession might have been taken for a funeral. The people applauded compassionately, but the soldiers frowned in silence. Vitellius made a short harangue in the forum, and then, taking his dagger from his side, as the ensign of power, tendered it to the consul Cæcilius. The soldiers murmured aloud, and the consul, in pity or from fear, declined to accept it. He then turned towards the temple of Concord, meaning there to leave the symbols of imperial office, and retire to the house of his brother. But the soldiers now interposed. They would not suffer him to hide himself in a private dwelling, but compelled him to retrace his steps to the palace, which he entered once more, hardly conscious whether he were still emperor or not.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 65.: "Sæpe domi congressi (in the palace?) postremo in æde Apollinis pepigere." The temple of Apollo was probably that on the Palatine, connected with the imperial residence. Either it had suffered little in Nero's fire, or it had been speedily restored.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 67., xv. Kal. Jan. (Dec. 18. 822): "Audita defectione legionis cohortiumque, quæ se Narniæ dediderant."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 68.: "Interclusum aliud iter, idque solum quod in Sacram

By the senate, however, by the knights, the magistrates, and police of the city, the transfer of the empire was regarded as accomplished. All crowded to the mansion of Sabinus, as the representative of their new sovereign, and there heard, not without dismay, the murmurs and menaces of the Germanic cohorts. They urged Sabinus to arm at once for their defence, for his own defence, for the defence of his brother's throne; but their force was small, their measures were hastily taken, and while conveying him towards the palace, which they wished him at once to occupy, they were met, at a spot called Fundanius' pool, by the enraged Vitellians, attacked, and routed.<sup>1</sup> Sabinus, with those nearest to him, made for the Capitoline hill, and threw himself into the enclosed precincts of the Capitolium, or temple of Jupiter. The Vitellians contented themselves with watching the outlets during the day; but at night they were too indolent or too careless to keep guard through a violent storm of rain, and Sabinus was enabled to communicate with his friends in the city, to receive Domitianus and his own children into his place of refuge, and notify his peril to the Flavian generals beyond the walls. At dawn he sent to Vitellius to complain of the violation of their agreement, and remind him of the good faith with which he had himself acted, and the indulgence with which, though backed by a conquering army, he had treated his opponent. Vitellius assented to these representations, but pleaded his inability

*Viam pergeret patebat.*" Vitellius had descended into the Via Sacra by the Porta Mugionis, traversed the forum, ascended the rostra, and proceeded to the temple of Concord at the foot of the Capitoline. He would have retired to the house of Sabinus, which I conjecture (see the following note) to have been in the direction of the Quirinal; but the soldiers compelled him to return by the same way he had come. "*Tum consilii inops in palatium rediit.*"

<sup>1</sup> Of the Lacus Fundani we only learn from an inscription (Gruter, 396. 5.) that it gave name to a Vicus. The Curtian and Servilian pools indicated ancient swamps in the trough of the forum, which had been drained by the great Cloaca. Possibly the Fundanian Pool was a similar spot near the Suburra. It seems, from the narrative, that it lay nearly between the house of Sabinus and the Palatine. The inscription is said to have been found on the Quirinal.

ity to restrain his own soldiers, and could only indicate to the envoy a secret way of exit from the palace. Scarcely had this officer returned to the Capitol, when the Vitellians rushed tumultuously, without a leader, to the assault. They mounted the ascent from the forum to the main entrance of the enclosure, and reached an outer gate on the slope, as it would appear, of the Clivus:<sup>1</sup> the Flavians issued on the roofs of the colonnades which flanked the right side of the ascent, and hurled stones and tiles on the assailants. They in their turn, not being furnished with military engines, nor pausing to send for them, threw blazing brands into the colonnades, which were probably of wood, and thus drove the defenders from arch to arch, till the fire reached the gate. The doors would have been soon consumed, and the Vitellians would have rushed into the enclosure, but Sabinus had torn from their pedestals the statues of gods and men which thronged the precincts of the temple, and cast them down before the gates to form a barrier. Thus baffled, the assailants retreated down the hill to the forum, where two other ways branched off, the one immediately to the right, ascending to the Asylum be-

Attack and defence of the Capitol.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 71.: "Cito agmine forum et imminientia foro templa prætervecti, erigunt aciem per adversum collem, usque ad primas Capitolinæ arcis fores." For a full discussion of the topography of this interesting passage I must refer the reader to a notice in the *Journal of Classical Philology*, No. x. Mar. 1887. It may suffice to state in this place the conclusions to which I am led.—1. The point of attack was the Capitoline temple or Capitol, called by Tacitus Capitolum and Arx Capitolina. 2. This temple stood on the Tarpeian or S. W. summit of the Capitoline hill, the N. W. summit (the site of the present Araceli) being the Arx proper, at this time an indefensible position. 3. The outer gate ("primæ fores") was perhaps that known by the name of the Porta Pandana, on the ascent of the Capitoline, beneath the Tabularium. 4. The ascent by the Hundred Steps was from the Velabrum to the left. 5. That by the Lucus Asyli was from the Forum and Carcer to the right. 6. The second attack was made from the level of the Asylum (about the present steps by the Conservators' palace), the assailants having turned the exterior defences of the Capitol beneath the Tabularium. These defences, indeed, had been only extemporized, for the Porta Pandana was generally left open, from whence it took its name.

tween the Tabularium and the Carcer; the other in the opposite direction, and much more circuitous, passing through the Velabrum beneath the Tarpeian rock, and so by the flight of the Hundred Stairs to the platform of the Capitol. On each side there were, as it appears, lateral approaches to the temple; that from the Asylum was the nearest, and here the Vitellians pressed with the greatest force and numbers. The base of the Capitol was about thirty feet higher than that of the Asylum; but they easily scaled the houses, which leant against the wall, and rose to the level of the enclosing rampart.<sup>1</sup> The assailants forced their way by fire, the defenders strove by the same means to obstruct their progress, nor was it known from which side the flames alighted on the roofs of the Capitoline buildings, spread along the galleries which surrounded the triple cell, and finally kindled the gable of dry and ancient wood which crowned its summit.<sup>2</sup> The whole temple was soon in a blaze from end to end, and the august sanctuary of the Roman people was consumed in the raging conflagration.

Conflagration  
of the temple.

The assault, the defence, the conflagration, were watched

<sup>1</sup> The Capitoline temple comprehended three cells, those of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, beneath a single roof and pediment. It may have been about fifty feet in width, and less, I suppose, in height; built of stone, but the roof of wood. It was surrounded on three sides by rows of pillars, double at the sides, triple in front, but seems to have been closed in with a blank wall at the back. This precinct was nearly a square of two hundred feet, erected upon a stone platform, which itself was supported by vast obstructions from the base of the hill. There seems to have been also an outer precinct, the Area Capitolina, perhaps only in front, and the whole, it may be presumed, was enclosed with a wall. The Capitol faced S. (Liv. i. 55.), more precisely, I imagine, S. E., fronting the Forum.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Inde lapsus ignis in porticus appositae sedibus; mox sustinentes fastigium aquilae vetere ligno traxerunt flammam alueruntque." The "aquilae" are the leaning rafters which formed the angle of the pediment, which seem to have been open, according to the well-known description of the temple in the *Iphigenia in Tauris* of Euripides. We are not to suppose that the temples of Rome at this period were generally constructed so rudely; but the priests had insisted that the Capitol should be rebuilt, after the Sullan conflagration, exactly on the ancient model.

by Vitellius from the palace opposite; by the Roman people from the forum and Velabrum beneath, as well as from the summit of every hill. *The Gauls*, Domitian escapes. Sabinus is taken, and slain. he exclaimed, *were again masters of the city; yet even the Gauls had never burnt the Capitol, nor overthrown the sacred pledge of empire, the shrine of Jupiter, the Best and Greatest, the shrine vowed by Tarquinius Priscus, and built from the spoils of war by Superbus.* Once, indeed, in the first civil war, that holy fane had been consumed by fire; but it had risen again from its ashes, erected by Sulla, and dedicated by Catulus, whose honoured name had continued to grace its summit amidst so many monuments devoted to the glory of the Cæsars.<sup>1</sup> The fugitives within the precincts were dismayed with horror at the scene. Sabinus lost all courage and presence of mind, and made no further attempt at defence. The Gauls and Germans, checked by no reverence for Roman divinities, burst in with yells of triumph, and put to the sword all that could not escape in the confusion. Domitian contrived, with a freedman's help, to disguise himself in priest's robes, and found an asylum with a servant of the temple.<sup>2</sup> Sabinus was seized, bound and carried to Vitellius; the populace clamoured for his death, as the author of the national calamity; and Vitellius in vain expostulated with them before the doors of the palace. The old man was struck down, pierced and mutilated, and his headless trunk dragged to the Gemoniæ. Atticus, one of the consuls, who was taken with him, saved himself by declaring that his own hand had fired the Capitol. The Vitellians were satisfied with this avowal, which seemed to relieve them from the crime, and the indignation of the citizens was already appeased by the blood of Sabinus.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, chap. iv. of this work (Vol. I. p. 155, note). Notwithstanding the decree of the senate for the substitution of Cæsar's name for that of Catulus, the original inscription remained. Tacitus says expressly: "Lutatii Catuli nomen inter tanta Cæsarum opera usque ad Vitellium mansit."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 74.: "Lineo amictu." Comp. Suet. *Domit.* 1.: "Isiacæ celatus habitu."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 75.



But the blood of a brother of Vespasian could not sink into the ground. No more hope of pardon for the conquered ;

Antonius leads  
his forces to  
the gates of  
Rome.

no room for retreat and unmolested privacy. The murderer of Sabinus must now rush to the field, or fall by the hand of the executioner.

Meanwhile Lucius Vitellius had not yet laid down his arms. From his camp at Feronia he continued to watch Tarracina, and, gaining admittance there by treachery, slew the Flavian commander and his undisciplined partisans. Had he now returned at once to Rome, he would have met the Flavians in the heart of the city, and the conflict which would have ensued between them might have ended in its utter destruction. But he contented himself with sending to ask his brother whether he should return, or prosecute the reduction of Campania. By this delay the event was decided. Primus was advancing along the Flaminian Way, but leisurely, in order not to outstrip the arrival of Mucianus. At Oriculum he halted for some days to keep the feast of the Saturnalia. However, he sent forward Petilius Cerealis with a thousand horse; and this squadron crossing from the Flaminian to the Salarian Way, attempted to penetrate into the city. But the Vitellians were on the alert, and received them with a mixed force of horse and foot in the lanes and among the garden walls outside the gates, where they checked and discomfited them. Primus had arrived at Saxa Rubra, when he learnt the destruction of the Capitol, the repulse of Cerealis, and the revived efforts of the Vitellians, who were arming the populace and the slaves. Vitellius himself had come forth in public, had harangued the citizens, and sent them forth to *defend their country*: he had convened the senate and appointed envoys to treat in the name of the republic. It was not a time when the voice of argument could be heard on either side, least of all, the sage maxims and gentle exhortations of a teacher of philosophy, such as the stoic Musonius, who mingled unbidden with the deputation to Primus, and harangued the soldiers in their ranks on the blessings of

peace and the pains and perils of warfare.<sup>1</sup> From smiles and jeers they would have proceeded to violence, had he not taken wiser counsel, and abstained from his unseasonable admonitions. The Vestals, who bore letters to the general, were treated with due respect; but their petition for a single day for conference was sternly rejected. The death of Sabinus, it was declared, and the destruction of the Capitol, had rendered parley impossible.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed the soldiers of Primus would brook not an instant's delay. They insisted on being led immediately to the gates, and panted for the last death-struggle with the foes whose colours they saw flying from the summits of the seven hills. The Flavian army advanced in three divisions; on the left by the Salarian Way to the Colline gate; on the right through fields and meadows along the bank of the Tiber; the centre occupied the Flaminian road which led direct to the foot of the Capitol. The Vitellians went out to meet their assailants at all points, soldiers and rabble mingled together, without plan or order. But in one quarter only, beside the gardens of Sallust, on the slope of the Pincian, where the Flavians were impeded by narrow and slippery lanes, did they maintain the combat with some spirit, till a party of the assailants, bursting in through the Colline gate, took the defenders in the rear. At the centre and on the right the Flavians carried everything immediately before them, and drove their opponents with slaughter from the Campus Martius into the city. The victors entered pell-mell with the vanquished, for the gates of Rome now stood, it seems, always open, and the combat was renewed from street to street, the populace looking gaily on, applauding or hooting as in the theatre, and helping to

Storm of the  
city, and com-  
bat in the  
streets.

<sup>1</sup> We have last heard of this philosopher as digging in the trench of Nero's Isthmian canal. It seems that he had been restored, as a noble Roman, from exile, under Galba. Tac. *Hist.* iii. 81.: "Miscuerat se legatis Musonius Rufus, equestris ordinis, studium philosophiæ et placita Stoicorum æmulatus . . . omisit intempestivam sapientiam."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 76-81.

drag the fugitives from the shops and taverns for slaughter. The rabble of the city, men and women, half-drunk, half-naked, dabbled in the blood of the dead and dying, or threw themselves into the defenceless houses, and snatched their plunder even from the hands of the soldiers. Rome had seen the conflicts of armed men in the streets under Sulla and Cinna, but never before such a hideous mixture of levity and ferocity; never before had her bastard brood, the worthless mob of the forum, betrayed so flagrantly their contempt for the weal and honour of their country.<sup>1</sup>

Through all these horrors the Flavians forced their way without flinching, and drove the Vitellians to their last stronghold in the camp of the prætorians. The lines of this enclosure were strenuously attacked and desperately defended. The Vitellians had no hope of escape, none of quarter. Intent on the capture of Rome, their assailants had brought with them on their march the engines requisite for a siege, and now set themselves to their last task with determination. They cleared the battlements with the catapult; raised mounds or towers to the level of the ramparts, or applied torches to the gates. Then bursting into the camp, they put every man still surviving to the sword. Vitellius, on the taking of the city, had escaped from the rear of the palace in a litter to the Aventine, where his wife possessed a residence, hoping to conceal himself through the day, and fly in the darkness of the night to his brother's stronghold in Tarracina. But his restlessness could not suffer him to remain there. He returned, under some strange impulse, once more to the palace, and roamed through its now deserted halls, dismayed at solitude and silence, yet shrinking from every sound, and the presence of a human being.<sup>2</sup> At last he was found, half hidden be-

Storm of the  
prætorian  
camp.

Vitellius, hesi-  
tating to make  
his escape, is  
dragged from  
his conceal-  
ment in the  
palace and  
slain.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 82, 83.: "Nulla partium cura, malis publicis læti." Dion (lxx. 19.) computes the slain altogether at fifty thousand.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 84.: "In palatium regreditur, vastum desertumque . . . . terret solitudo et tacentes leci: tentat clausa; inhorrescit vacuis." Suet. *Vitell.* 16.

hind a curtain, by a tribune, and ignominiously dragged forth. With his hands bound, his dress torn, he was hurried along, amidst the scoffs of the multitude, and without one voice raised even in pity for his misfortunes. One of the Germanic soldiers meeting him, cut him down at once, in fury, or possibly in mercy. But with the same blow the man had struck the tribune, and was immediately slain by his attendants. Vitellius himself was not mortally wounded, and was reserved for more pain and insult. The soldiers pricked him with their weapons, to urge him on, or stopped him to witness the demolition of his statues, and gaze upon the spot where Galba had fallen: they kept his head erect with a sword placed beneath his chin, flung mud and filth in his face, and smote his cheek with insolent mockery. At last they thrust or dragged him to the Gemoniæ, and there despatched him with many wounds.<sup>1</sup>

*Yet I was once your Emperor*, were the last words he uttered, and the worthiest that have been recorded of him.<sup>2</sup> He was once a Roman General; and to have commanded the legions was to have felt the dignity of a man responsible for the fate of armies and the welfare of the provinces. He was once a Roman Emperor; and to have worn the imperial purple for nine months only, was to fill a space in the world, and leave a name in history. It was for this accident alone, indeed, that the name of Vitellius deserves to be registered in human annals. The frankness and good fellowship allowed him were at best trifling and common-place merits, nor had he the force of character which may render a bad man remark-

Concluding  
remarks on the  
character of  
Vitellius.

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius is particular in describing these insults: "Religatis post terga manibus, injecto cervicibus laqueo, veste discissa, seminudus . . . reducto coma capite, ceu noxii solent, atque etiam mento mucrone gladii subrecto, ut visendam præberet faciem neve submitteret: quibusdam stercore et oeno incessantibus . . . tandem apud Gemonias minutissimis ictibus excarnificatus est." He is repeated by Dion, Eutropius, and Orosius.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iii. 85.: "Vox una non degeneris animi . . . se tamen Imperatorem ejus fuisse." Dion, lxxv. 21.

able. To his indolence, his profligacy, his beastly sensuality, we have overwhelming testimony. He was weak, easy-tempered, unprincipled, unscrupulous; he was selfish and hard-hearted; but the charge of ferocious cruelty made by some writers against him is hardly supported by Tacitus, and the stories regarding it do not always agree together. It is recorded to his credit, that he had spared not only the kinsman of Vespasian, who was to succeed him, but of Otho, whom he had supplanted.<sup>1</sup> Some allowance may fairly be made for the countenance naturally given by his successor to the most disparaging view of his conduct. The account I have followed is circumstantial, and consistent, and I cannot abandon lines so vigorously traced by Tacitus, for the satire and ribaldry of Suetonius and Dion. Indeed the *Histories* of Tacitus, which give the narrative of these times in greater detail than it seems necessary here to follow, are in my judgment more to be relied on than his *Annals*. The pictures he has drawn of Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian, bear the full impress of truth. They exhibit characters aptly moulded by the circumstances in which they are placed, with such a mixture of good and evil as stamps them at once as genuine. Relieved from the painful duty of criticizing and correcting, I have had only to copy them on a smaller scale to the best of my humble ability.

The "Histories" of Tacitus more to be relied on than his "Annals."

The occupation of Rome by a conquering army, citizens in name, but with none of the feelings of citizens in their hearts, was a disaster long and painfully remembered. The utter rout and massacre of the vanquished did not calm at once the passions of the victors. *The war was over, but peace had not recommenced.* Armed bands continued to traverse the streets, without leaders or discipline, insulting or attacking

The Flavian leaders divide places and honours among themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lrv. 22. Tacitus allows of him (iii. 86.): "Inerat tamen simplicitas ac liberalitas . . . Amicitias . . . meruit magis quam habuit." Vitellius, according to the precise statement of Dion, lived fifty-four years and eighty-nine days; born in Sept. 768, died Dec. 822.

all who displeased them, all whom they chose to regard as their enemies, many who had no other demerit than their respectable appearance. The thirst for blood was soon turned to a lust of plunder, and now, under pretence of searching for Vitellians, or often with no pretence at all, the soldiers broke into private houses, guided by slaves and clients, or even by professed friends of the wealthiest citizens. The chiefs of the Flavian party were unable to restrain these excesses; they were too intent, perhaps, on securing the fruits of victory, to regard them. They had raised the young Domitian to the place and name of a Cæsar, and were now engaged in intriguing among themselves for office under him. The prefecture of the guards fell to Arrius Varus; but Antonius Primus secured the substance of power by obtaining superior influence over the young prince's mind. The slaves and valuables of the palace fell to the share of Primus, who claimed them almost avowedly, as the plunder due to his victory at Cremona.<sup>1</sup> One thing alone remained to complete that victory, the destruction of L. Vitellius, and his faction still in arms in Tarracina. A squadron of horse was sent on as far as Aricia; the infantry of a single legion halted at no greater distance than Bovillæ. This demonstration was sufficient. L. Vitellius surrendered without conditions, and his troops were led disarmed to Rome in a sort of triumphal procession, between the ranks of their captors, scowling at the populace who poured forth to see them, and beheld their humiliation with flippant derision. Their chief was put to death, but the men were only kept for a time in custody; while the embers of civil war were easily stifled in Campania, where the Third legion was quartered as in a conquered country, not so much for the sake of precaution as to gratify a mass of greedy and unruly veterans.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This man seems neither to have obtained nor claimed the character of a Roman at all. It had been portended that Vitellius should fall into the hands of a Gaul, and Primus was born at Tolosa, and known in childhood by the native appellation of Beccus (bec), the beak of a cock. Suet. *Vitell.* 18.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 1, 2.; Dion, l. c.

The death of Vitellius on the 21st of December cleared the field for Vespasian; but the principate of the new emperor dated from the 1st of July, the day when the legions swore to him at Alexandria. The senators hastened to decree him all the honours and prerogatives of empire in one magnificent manifesto, and paid zealous court to his son.<sup>1</sup> Vespasian himself was still far distant; nor, indeed, when the news of his triumph reached him, did he make any precipitate haste to assume in person the honours proffered him. His real dependence was on Mucianus, whom, true and faithful as he knew him to be, he could suffer to assume the airs of one who had conferred an empire he might have seized for himself. The despatches this proud soldier sent to the senate, while yet absent from the city, caused anxiety, and even alarm. The advice he presumed to give on public affairs might at least, it was remarked, have been reserved for his place among the senators; but its tone, in fact, savoured of the camp, rather than of the Curia. All, however, continued smooth externally. The triumphal ornaments were voted to him, ostensibly for the defence of Mœsia. The prætorian insignia were conferred on Primus and Varus; and on the same day a decree was passed for the restoration of the Capitol. The language and demeanour of the senators towards their new chief and his ministers were as fawn-

The principate of Vespasian dates from July 1, 69.

Decree for the restoration of the Capitol.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 8.: "At Romæ Senatus omnia principibus solita Vespasiano decernit." A brazen tablet with an inscription, purporting to be a fragment of this very decree, is still shown at Rome (see chap. xxxi. Vol. III. p. 381.), but its genuineness is disputed. Orelli does not admit it into his collection. The technical language is no doubt occasionally inaccurate for the time of Vespasian, but it may be regarded as drawn up in the phraseology of an earlier period. Of its external marks of authenticity, I have met with no account, except that Niebuhr declares that the mere inspection ought to satisfy an intelligent inquirer in its favour. *Rom. Hist.* i. 343. note 860. The tenor of the decree is to confer on the new emperor all the executive authority possessed by Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius, before him. If it bestowed special offices and titles, these must have been enumerated in the earlier part of the document, which is wanting.

ing as under Nero. One of them alone, Helvidius Priscus, whose name became afterwards famous, spoke with no intemperate freedom.<sup>1</sup> He proposed that the national temple should be rebuilt by the nation, and Vespasian be asked to assist the good work as the first of the citizens, rather than suffer himself to undertake it in their name; a motion which the senate timidly passed over in silence. The same man, a noted disciple of the Stoics, and already conspicuous for his fearlessness, menaced the delators of the late reigns with prosecution. When, before the close of this busy sitting, a deputation was proposed from the senate to Vespasian, he insisted that the magistrates should appoint the members of it by open vote, choosing on oath those whom they deemed most honourable and best affected to the new settlement of affairs: but such a proceeding, it was felt, would fix a stigma on the bad or suspected, and, after a sharp debate, the courtiers of the late emperors carried the appointment by ballot.<sup>2</sup>

Motion of Helvidius Priscus.

The efforts of the sterner patriots to bring the culprits of the late reigns to justice, as the only way in which they could proclaim their own principles, caused much agitation in the ranks of the nobles, and, coupled with the suppressed irritation of the conquered and the licentious violence of the conquerors, threatened a fresh crisis in the city. The speedy entry of Mucianus within the walls was felt as a relief, and there was a general disposition to appeal to his decision, and sanction all his measures. He began by imposing restraint on Primus and Varus, and making them feel that they had found a master. All eyes were immediately turned towards him; courtiers and senators thronged anxiously around him. He paraded the streets at the head of his armed bands, checked licence with a strong hand, and disposed at his will of the houses and gardens which had become for a moment the prey of the most

Strong measures of Mucianus in the city.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Eo Senatus die quo de imperio Vespasiani censebant." The whole of these proceedings were the work of a single day.



audacious plunderer. Leaving still to Vespasian the title of emperor, he seized on all the power, and treated even the son of Vespasian as his subaltern. With cruel precaution, he commanded the death of Galerianus, the son of the unfortunate Piso, Galba's colleague for a week, as a possible pretender to the empire; and he was gratified with the suicide of Priscus, the Vitellian prefect of the prætorians, who killed himself from shame and mortification. Asiaticus, the freedman and favourite of the late emperor, was degraded to a slave's death on the cross.<sup>1</sup>

On the 1st of January, 823, ten days after the death of Vitellius, affairs in the city seemed to resume their usual course with the appointment of Vespasian and Titus to the consulship; though the occurrence of stormy weather, which kept the corn-fleets of Africa out at sea, alarmed the people, and caused rumours of a revolt in that important province. Domitian was raised to the prætorship, and he filled ostensibly the first place in the administration; but he was indolent and dissolute, and abandoned himself to intrigue and debauchery. While this young prince's name was affixed to every edict and appointment, the real power in all essential matters remained in the hands of Mucianus. The interests of Vespasian were secured by a general change in the magistracy, both at home and in the provinces, and the emperor is said to have thanked Domitian ironically for not superseding him in his eastern command.<sup>2</sup> Mucianus was not less intent on breaking down the influence of Primus and Varus: he withdrew their best legions from their command, and these he dismissed to the Syrian or German frontier. His utmost vigilance was still required to allay the animosities which were repeatedly breaking out among the soldiers of so many generals in the city, and not less to satisfy the demand excited by their reckless promises. A prætorian guard

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 11. For the splendid fortunes of Asiaticus, see Tac. *Hist.* ii. 95.: "Nondum quartus a victoria mensis, et libertus Vitellii Asiaticus Polycleto, Patrobis, et vetera odiorum nomina sequabat." For his infamous compliances, such as popular rumour described them, Suet. *Vitell.* 12.

<sup>2</sup> Dion, lxvi. 2.

was embodied from among the most clamorous of every army, and many who coveted the pay and indulgences of their favoured service were with difficulty appeased with honours and donatives. The necessities of the government demanded an aid of sixty millions of sesterces, which it was proposed to exact by a forced loan from the citizens; but the decree for raising it was not put in execution. It was used perhaps only as a menace, the dread of which stimulated the people to rally round the government. As Mucianus grew stronger, his acts became more and more vigorous. The consulships promised by L. Vitellius were formally withdrawn from his nominees and given to trusty friends of the victor, and the remains of the martyred Sabinus were honoured with a public funeral. The murder of L. Piso, a cousin of Galerianus, might seem to confirm the power of the new dynasty by removing another collateral pretender; but it affected it with a deep stain. This indeed was not the act of Vespasian, nor even of Mucianus, but of Piso's colleague in the government of Africa, who tried first to engage him in a revolt, and, when baffled by his unambitious modesty, accused him falsely of the attempt, and raised an armed force to despatch him.<sup>1</sup>

Many a herald of victory, eager for reward, had crossed the seas during the winter, to be the first to greet Vespasian with the tidings of his success. They had found him in his quarters at Alexandria, arranging, on the one hand, the plan of his son's operations in Judea, preparing, on the other, for his own descent upon Italy, as soon as the season should admit of embarking his troops. While his fortunes were yet dubious, such had been the anticipation of his success, that Vologesus offered him forty thousand horsemen for the campaign; and it was considered the height of good fortune in a Roman general to have received such an offer from the national enemy, and to be in a condition to refuse it.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 39. 47. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 51.; Suet. *Vesp.* 6. But a few years before, Lucan had ex-

Parthian monarch was desired to tender his alliance to the senate, and informed that peace was already restored to Rome by the hands of the Romans themselves. But, amidst his triumphs, Vespasian heard with vexation of the vices of Domitian, which were throwing a shade over the opening promise of his principate. He seems to have been early apprised that the young man was aiming, vaguely and frivolously indeed, on seizing the empire for himself; and though it was clear that he had neither abilities nor influence for such an enterprise, that he should merely harbour the thought was distressing alike to the prince and to the father. Titus, to whom he now finally committed the conduct of the Jewish war, interceded, before leaving him, for his erring brother, venturing to remind him that friends might be changed with circumstances, but that kinsmen must always remain such, and to warn him that the brothers would not long continue united, if their sire set them the example of disregarding the ties of blood. Vespasian promised to watch over the common interests of his house, and dismissed him to the great struggle which was to make him illustrious among Roman generals. He urged forward the despatch of corn-vessels from Egypt; for Rome was suffering from scarcity. When the ships arrived with their freight, only ten days' consumption of grain remained, it was said, in the city.<sup>1</sup>

With the return of abundance and tranquillity, the first care of the senate was to commence the restoration of the Capitol; for while the temple of Jupiter lay in ruins the fortunes of the empire seemed to suffer an eclipse. This pious work was entrusted, according to ancient precedent, to one of the most respected of the citizens, by name L. Vestinus, who, though only of knightly family, was equal in personal repute to any of the senators.<sup>2</sup> The Haruspices, whom he consulted, demanded

Foundation of  
the new Capit-  
tol.

pressed the deepest disgust at the intention imputed to Pompeius of seeking aid from Parthia. "*Quid Parthos transire docet?*" *Phars.* viii. 331. foll.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 53.: "*Equestris ordinis virum, sed auctoritate famaue inter*

that the ruins of the fallen building should be conveyed away, and cast into the lowest places of the city, and the new temple erected precisely on the old foundations; for the gods, they declared, would have no change made in the form of their familiar dwelling. On the 20th June, being a fair and cloudless day, the area of the temple precincts was surrounded with a string of fillets and chaplets. Soldiers, chosen for their auspicious names, were marched into it, bearing boughs of the most auspicious trees; and the Vestals, attended by a troop of boys and girls, both whose parents were living, sprinkled it with water drawn from bubbling founts or running streamlets. Then, preceded by the pontiffs, the priestor Helvidius, staking round, sanctified the space with the mystical washing of sow's, sheep's, and bull's blood, and placed their entrails on a grassy altar. This done, he invoked Jove, Juno, and Minerva, and all the patrons of the empire, to prosper the undertaking, and raise by divine assistance their temple, founded by the piety of men. Then he touched with his hand the connected fillets, and the magistrates, the priests, the senators, the knights, with a number of the people, lent their strength to draw a great stone to the spot where the building was to commence.<sup>1</sup> Beneath it they laid pieces of gold and silver money, minted for the occasion, as well as of unwrought metal; for the Haruspices forbade either stone or metal to be used which had been employed before for profane purposes. The temple rose from the deep substructions of Tarquinius exactly, as was required, on the plan of its predecessor. Formerly, when this fane was restored under Catulus, it was wished to give greater effect to the cell by placing it on a flight of steps; and it was proposed, not to

procures." Of the man who obtained this unusual honour, strangely enough nothing whatever is known. An Atticus Vestinus is mentioned as consul in 818, and suffering under Nero, *Ann.* xv. 69., but the gens is not known of either, nor whether there was any connexion between them. *Comp.* Martial, *lv* 72.

<sup>1</sup> *Tac. Hist.* iv. 53. The ruins of the old building were removed to the foundations, and carted into the low grounds at the foot of the hill. "Haruspices monuere ut reliquæ prioris delubri in paludes aveherentur."

heighten the building itself, which the Haruspices forbade, but to lower the platform before it. But this platform was itself the roof of a labyrinth of vaults and galleries, used for offices and storerooms, and this expedient was pronounced impracticable. Vespasian, more fortunate than his predecessor, obtained permission to raise the elevation of the edifice, which now, perhaps for the first time, was allowed to overtop the colonnades around it, and to fling its broad bulk athwart the *temphum* of the southern sky, in which the auspices were taken from the neighbouring summit of the *Arx*.<sup>1</sup>

In the eyes of the citizens one thing alone might seem wanting on this occasion to their prince's glory, that he should himself be present at the solemnity, and conduct it in person. So natural was it, indeed, to suppose him there, taking the part of an Augustus or a Claudius in the expiation of his country's sins, that it came to be commonly believed that he was actually present, and such is the assertion of some writers of authority.<sup>2</sup> Yet the circumstantial account of Tacitus proves clearly that this was not the case, and the discrepancy is worth noting from the hint it gives us of the causes which have helped to obscure the truth of facts at this period. Vespasian was already assuming in the eyes of the Romans something of the divine character: the Flavian race was beginning to supplant the Julian in their imagination; or rather what was wanting to the imagination was supplied by the spirit of flattery, which represented the hero himself

The Flavian family begins to be regarded with superstitious reverence.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Altitudo ædibus adjecta: id solum religio adnuere: et prioris templi magnificentie defuisse creditum." For the story about Catulus see Gellius, ii. 10. The *temphum*, in the augural sense, was the southern half of the heavens, as observed from the *Auguraculum*, a spot on the northern summit of the hill. This summit is thirty feet higher than the Tarpeian, and may possibly have commanded a clear view, as was technically required, over the roof of the Capitoline temple. It seems not improbable that the difficulty about elevating the temple arose from the objection to its cutting the horizon, which it required the good fortune of a Vespasian to overcome.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Vesp.* 8.; Dion, lxi. 10.

and all that concerned him in factitious colours.<sup>1</sup> It began to be affirmed that the marvellous rise of the Sabine veteran had been signified long before by no doubtful omens at home; a Jewish captive, the historian Josephus, had prophetically saluted him as emperor;<sup>2</sup> the *common* and *constant belief* of the Jews, that from the midst of them should spring a ruler of the world, was declared to have received in this event its glorious consummation. But while the Romans were thus surrounding the object of their reverence with the halo of sanctity, the Orientals had ventured to invest him with attributes more palpably divine. At Alexandria a blind man, one well known as such, so it is pretended, in the city, had thrown himself at his feet and implored him to touch his eyes with spittle; a cripple had entreated him to plant his heel upon him. Both declared that their god Serapis had assured them of the new demi-god's power to heal their infirmities. Miraculous cures ascribed to Vespasian at Alexandria. Vespasian, as a blunt soldier, was inclined to laugh at these importunities; but his flatterers urged him to make trial of his growing divinity, and his physicians at the same time encouraged him to believe that the suppliants were only partially blind or lame, and possibly his operation in the way prescribed might have some natural efficacy. At all events, they added, he might gain in reputation by success, while he could not lose by failure. Vespasian, half cynical, half superstitious, put forth his hand and his foot, and when the blind saw and the lame walked, allowed himself easily to be deceived by one of the grossest impostures recorded in sober history. He conceived an immense admiration for the god who had so justly measured his extraordinary powers, and when he went to consult

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Vesp.* 7.: "Auctoritas et quasi majestas quædam inopinato et adhuc novo principi deerat: hæc quoque accessit." Sil. Ital. iii. 594.:

"Exin se Curibus virtus (coelestis ad astra  
Efferet, et sacris augebit nomen Iulius  
Bellatrix gens baccifero nutrita Sabino."

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Vespas.* 5. Joseph. *B. J.* iii. 8, 9. Comp. Tac. *Hist.* ii. 78.: "Rescubant animo vetera omina;" foll.

him in his temple at Alexandria, the priests took care to confirm this devotion by fresh omens of impending greatness.<sup>1</sup>

Vespasian, however, had not loitered on his way to empire in quest of oracles to assure him of it. He had been detained through the spring of 828 by north-west winds, which prevented navigation at that season, and it was not till the end of May that he was able to put to sea and direct his course towards Italy.<sup>2</sup> Had he sailed direct to Rome he might yet have reached his destination in time to share in the ceremony on the Capitoline; but reasons of state which have not been explained to us may have determined him to advance more leisurely, and to visit the various spots in Asia and Greece at which vessels usually touched on their way westward.<sup>3</sup> It seems clear that he was not anxious to get quickly to Rome. Possibly he wished his affairs to be well established by Mucianus before his own arrival, and the odium which might attach to the first necessary severities to be partly dissipated. Among these was the execution of the son of Vitellius, whom Mucianus had sacrificed to the interests of the new dynasty. The same minister had set himself sternly against the claims of Antonius Primus to the emperor's special confidence. He would not suffer Domitian to retain him among his companions, and had driven him to leave Italy, and represent to Vespasian in person his merits and their requital. But the letters of Mucianus effectually counteracted the influence he might hope to exercise by personal application. The emperor regarded him with jealousy, and was fully persuaded, on the testimony of many friends, that his arrogance was unpopular among the citizens, as well as dangerous to the stability of the government.<sup>4</sup> If he con-

Vespasian  
quits Egypt,  
and reaches  
Rome in the  
summer of  
828.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 81, 82. Suet. *Vespas.* 7. Dion, lxxvi. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 81.: "Æstivis flatibus certa maria incipiunt vi. kal. Jun. (die xxvii. Mai) et desinunt viii. kal. Oct. (die xxiv. Sept.)," Brotier. in loc.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph. *B. J.* vii. 2. 1.: εἰς Ῥώδον διέβαινε· ἐντεύθεν . . . πάσας τὰς ἐν τῇ παρῇ πάλαις ἐπελθόν.

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 80.

tinued, however, to treat Primus with outward respect, it was perhaps from the apprehensions he could not wholly discard of his own minister. While the affairs of the new dynasty at Rome seemed to be settled firmly, and the capital itself lay prostrate from its exertions and sufferings during two years of agitation, such as it had not experienced since the days of Marius and Sulla, its position in the provinces was by no means equally secure. The services of Mucianus were again put in requisition to stay the defection of a great army in Gaul; but his authority, which threatened to become too great for a subject, was soon happily balanced by the exploits of the heir to the empire in Judea.



## CHAPTER LVIII.

REVOLTS IN THE PROVINCES: THE NORTH-WEST.—CLAUDIUS CIVILIS, UNDER PRETENCE OF SIDING WITH VESPASIAN, INTRIGUES FOR THE SUBVERSION OF THE ROMAN POWER ON THE RHINE.—CRITICAL STATE OF THE LEGIONS, THE AUXILIARIES, AND THE PROVINCE.—DISASTERS TO THE ROMAN ARMY.—CIVILIS BESIEGES THE ROMAN STATION OF VETRA.—MUTINY AMONG THE LEGIONARIES.—SLAUGHTER OF THEIR GENERAL AND DISSOLUTION OF THEIR FORCES.—TRIUMPHANT EXPECTATIONS OF A GALLO-GERMAN EMPIRE.—CAPITULATION AND MASSACRE OF THE GARRISON OF VETRA.—MOVEMENT OF THE FLAVIAN CHIEFS FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE PROVINCE.—CAMPAIGN OF CERIALIS, AND DEFEAT OF CIVILIS.—GRADUAL SUPPRESSION OF THE REVOLT AND SUBMISSION OF CIVILIS.—STORY OF JULIUS SABINUS, AND FINAL PACIFICATION OF GAUL (A. D. 69, 70. A. U. 822, 823.)

**T**HE Romans, it will be remembered, did not turn their arms against one another in the greatest of their civil wars, till Cæsar had reduced the West and Pompeius the East to entire submission. During the twenty years of the struggle between the senate and the people the provinces lay in perfect repose. While the blood of their conquerors was flowing in torrents, while their garrisons were withdrawn from the frontiers to the heart of the empire, while the commonwealth itself lay prostrate with exhaustion, the conquered made no effort to regain their independence; even the nations beyond the border looked on in silent amazement. Far different was the condition of the Roman states when the fears, the indignation, or the selfish ambition of Galba, and Galba's rivals and successors, once more marshalled the legions in mutual conflict. At either extremity of their wide dominions, in the

Formidable revolts in the provinces.

north-west and south-east, there arose at this period formidable revolts against the rulers of the nations; nor were they repressed without the employment of great military resources and the effusion of much Roman blood. The wars I have now to relate are interesting—one of them most deeply so—in their character and results, and it will be important to observe the pertinacity with which the conquerors still maintained their attitude in the face of their foreign subjects, at a moment when all their energies seemed tasked to keep erect the frame of their government at home.

The country of the Batavi, the island between the channels of the Wahal and the Old Rhine, scarce rose above the surrounding waters; the beds of its broad rivers had not been raised by the Alpine débris which have strewn them for eighteen ages since; but neither had its plains been protected from sea and land floods by lines of artificial embankment. A natural delta, like that of the Nile or Ganges at the present day, intersected with innumerable channels, streaked with lakes and stagnant pools, covered with rank grasses and tangled brushwood, formed the strip of neutral land which the Romans allowed to intervene between their province and the lair of yet untrodden barbarism. This wilderness was perhaps too difficult to conquer, too inhospitable to colonize; but, on the other hand, the wants of its inhabitants, who depended for everything but meat and fish upon their more civilized neighbours, rendered them amenable in some degree to Roman influence; nor did they refuse to acknowledge their dependence by serving the Roman government with their arms and paying it a nominal tribute. The Batavi, an offshoot of the great nation of the Chatti, were a tribe of horsemen, and their gallantry in the field and skill in riding and swimming on horseback made them useful auxiliaries in the German campaigns. One of the most conspicuous of their chiefs at this period was Claudius Civilis, whose name seems to indicate that he had attached himself as a client to the imperial family, and perhaps attained the distinction of

Civilis, the chief of the Batavi, resents his injurious treatment by the Romans.

Roman citizenship.<sup>1</sup> This man now commanded a cohort of his native cavalry in the service of Rome; but a brother named Julius Paulus had been beheaded for some act of insubordination, and Civilis himself transported to Italy, and cast into a dungeon there, in the latter days of Nero. Galba, however, had released and sent him home, where the legions, indignant at such favour accorded to a rebel, again demanded his punishment, and he was only saved by the policy of Vitellius, afraid, it would seem, of irritating a restless ally in the rear of his base of operations. But the Batavian was already beyond the power of soothing: he saw the Romans intent only on mutual slaughter; he beheld the garrisons of the Rhenish frontier moving, by troops and battalions, southward; he felt from his own haughty indignation that the name of Rome was odious to Gauls and Germans alike; and he burned to employ the skill and conduct learnt in the camps of the conquerors, for the subversion of their power, and the revenge of public and private wrongs.

The moment for this revolt was sagaciously chosen. The strength of the Germanic legions had been drained off into Italy, and though we shall still meet with the names of the First, the Fifth, the Fifteenth, and the Sixteenth in the Lower, and of the Fourth, the Thirteenth, and the Eighteenth in the Upper Province, we must regard these as mere skeleton battalions, denuded of their best men and most experienced officers.<sup>2</sup>

Reduced  
strength of the  
legions. Dis-  
satisfaction of  
the Belgic  
tribes.

<sup>1</sup> Civilis is called Julius, Tac. *Hist.* i. 59., but Claudius, iv. 13. I have adopted the name most commonly given to him by modern writers. The Claudian emperors were themselves sometimes designated as Julii, from the house into which they were adopted.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Tac. *Hist.* i. 55. 59., iv. 24. The history of the disposition of the Roman legions, during the three centuries that we have traces of it, is one of the most intricate problems of antiquity. Marquardt (in Becker's *Handbuch*, iii. 2. 352.) has treated the subject elaborately: he refers, however, sometimes to critics whom I have not been able to consult, and I do not always comprehend his processes. The reader must remember that the skeleton or *dépôt* of a legion, the strength of which was drafted off to a distance, might still retain its name in its original quarters. Sometimes in such cases the legion was split

Moreover, Galba had been obliged to buy the support of the Roman residents in Gaul by the establishment of a new colony, Augusta of the Treviri on the Moselle, at the expense of the native landowners; and not among the Treviri only, but throughout the Belgic tribes, deep dissatisfaction had been created by the exactions with which he had pampered his ill-disciplined armies and replenished his empty treasuries.<sup>1</sup> The spirit, indeed, of the unarmed provincials was too thoroughly cowed by the terror of the Roman name, or their strength too much broken by the constant drafts made on their youth for distant service, to allow them to rush into the field against their masters; but we may believe that they were prompt in aiding their revolted compatriots with supplies and secret information.

The man who flung this bold defiance at the conquerors, ventured, it was said, to compare himself with Hannibal and Sertorius, who both like him aspired to overthrow the Romans by the arms of their own subjects, and both like him were rendered terrible to the beholders by the loss of an eye.<sup>2</sup> Hannibal crossed the Alps to bring succour to the Gauls and Samnites; Sertorius brought the guerillas of Spain to support the cause of the Marians at Rome. Civilis, at the instance of Antonius Primus, pretended to raise Vespasian's standard against the forces of Vitellius on the Rhine, but among the trustiest of his own

*Civilis spreads  
disaffection  
among the  
Gaulish states.*

into two, and the supplemental division received a distinguishing title, such as Gemina. According to the arrangement of Augustus, there should have been four legions in the Upper and the same number in the Lower Germania; thus we find in the year 767 legions ii., xiii., xiv., xvi. in the one, and i., v., xx., xxi. in the other. (Tac. *Ann.* i. 37.) Of these, ii. and xiv. had been transferred to Britain, and replaced by iv. and xv. The xx. and xxi. have disappeared, and instead of them we find the xviii. only.

<sup>1</sup> The date of the Roman colony at Augusta Trevirorum can only be fixed approximately. Steininger (*Gesch. der Trevirer*, p. 83.) ascribes the foundation, with great probability, to Galba, referring to the statement of Tacitus, *Hist.* i. 53. Comp. Suet. *Galb.* 12.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 18.: "Sertorium se aut Hannibalem ferens, simili oris de honestamento."

associates he had already thrown off the mask. He had summoned the chiefs of the Batavian and kindred tribes to a national banquet in the solitude of a sacred grove. He had excited them to the utmost with wine and clamour, and inflamed their passions by appeals to their fear, hatred, and revenge. The name of the old national religion was invoked. Sacrifices were performed, oaths were interchanged and ratified by savage rites, such as their masters had proscribed, and vainly endeavoured to suppress. The Frisians, to the north of the Rhine, and the Caninefates, who occupied a portion of the island, joined in the projected insurrection, and were the first to rise. With a prompt and bold movement they dislodged the slender battalions stationed within their territories, and destroyed or captured the flotilla which secured the passage and navigation of the river. As soon as a national standard was raised, several squadrons of German and Gallic horse went over from the Roman camps; but the chiefs of the legions were in fact well disposed towards Vespasian, and while they made this outbreak a pretext for retaining their troops in Gaul, in spite of the urgent summons of Vitellius, who was now calling for every man and horse for service in Italy, they were in no haste to crush a movement which still bore at least the name of a diversion in favour of his rival. A few precious moments were thus gained to the insurgents. Civilis felt himself strong enough to avow his real objects. He dismissed his Gaulish prisoners, with injunctions to raise their friends and kinsmen for the liberty of Gaul, and proclaimed openly that the dominion of Rome was about to pass away, when the arms of the provincials, so long employed against their own independence, were raised once more in the cause of right and of nature.<sup>1</sup> A mutiny of the auxiliaries had never yet occurred in the Roman camps; such had been the good fortune, or such the dexterous policy, of the imperators. When at last it came, it took the Romans completely by surprise, and never certainly were they less pre-

Threatened  
mutiny of the  
auxiliaries.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 17.

pared, either in material or moral resources, to confront it. It was the policy of these conquerors, such at least as we can trace it at a later period, to employ on each frontier auxiliary battalions drawn from distant provinces rather than from the immediate neighbourhood. On the Rhine, however, the aggressive operations of Germanicus and Corbulo had caused a rapid consumption of new levies, and it was necessary perhaps to furnish the legions with an unusual proportion of native recruits. But these armies had now for some years been confined within their lines; the soldiers, Roman or Gallo-German, were not actively employed: the consequence had been a general relaxation of discipline among both classes, and the auxiliaries more particularly had become, we may suppose, dissatisfied in the consciousness of their real strength, and the inferiority of their position. Many circumstances had contributed to abate their respect for their masters. The officers had grown old in this distant service, and exercised their authority with feeble hands; the central government itself, impoverished by the extravagance of the Cæsars, no longer maintained its administration with its ancient vigour and precision on the frontiers, while the knowledge widely spread of the confusion which reigned in Italy created a general feeling of restlessness and expectation of change throughout the provinces.

Conscious of these elements of danger Hordeonius Flaccus, the commander of the Upper province, who had been left with the chief authority over all the forces of the empire in those regions, apprehended at once the full peril of the crisis. While still halting between the two Roman factions which divided his camps, he saw that the blow impending was aimed equally at both, and though he had at first given some countenance to Civilis, as a presumed Flavian partisan, he was now anxious to crush the rebel, whatever might be the service he should thus be doing to Vitellian interests. From his headquarters, placed, we may suppose, at Moguntiacum, he directed Mummius Lupercus, at the head of two legions, in the

Civilis defeats a Roman force in the island of the Batavi.

Lower province, to cross the Wahal, and give the insurgents battle in the heart of their island.<sup>1</sup> Lupercus was not wanting in energy; he effected the passage of the river; but while his right wing was flanked by the lukewarm battalions of the Ubii and Treviri, he incautiously allowed his left to be guarded by a detachment of Batavian horse, who accompanied him with the deliberate intention of deserting in the midst of his first engagement. Civilis, who seems to have purposely allowed his assailant to get into the island, came forward with alacrity to the encounter. The Ubii and Treviri fled at the first shock: the Romans were unable to hold their ground, but they managed to recross the river in decent order, and throw themselves into the fortified camp of *Castra Vetera*, one of the military stations which Drusus had planted on the Lower Rhine.<sup>2</sup> The Batavians went over to him at the critical moment.

This check was rapidly followed by another disaster. Eight Batavian cohorts had been summoned to Rome by

<sup>1</sup> *Moguntiacum* (Mainz) was the capital of the Upper Germania. The frontier of the two German provinces (so called from the numbers of that people transplanted into them from the right bank of the Rhine) has been variously drawn. A recent critic (Böcking, on *Not. Dign.* ii. 483.) has fixed it to the river Nahe (Nava), which enters the Rhine just below Bingen. See also Marquardt, in Becker's *Handbuch*, iii. 1. 91. The Nava was still an important landmark in the fourth century. Comp. Ansonius, *Mosell.* 1. foll.:

"Transieram celerem nebuloso flumine Navam . . ."

I step aside to show, in the lines that follow, how much poetical feeling lingered even at that time among the imitators of the antique literature. We, children of the mist, may sympathize with the admiration felt by a stranger from the Atlantic coast for the dry and clear atmosphere of the Rhine valley:

"Purior hic campis aer, Phœbusque sereno  
Lumine purpureum reserat jam sudus Olympum. . .  
Sed liquidum jubar, et rutilam visentibus æthram,  
Libera perspicui non invidet aura diei."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 18. *Castra Vetera* is supposed to be Xanten near Cleeve. "Great quantities of Roman remains have been dug out on that spot." Greenwood, *List. of the Germans*, i. 150., from Cluverius, *Germ. Ant.* p. 412.

Vitellius, and were already far advanced on their march through Gaul, when a courier from Civilis overtook them with pressing solicitations to join the cause of national independence. Their part was at once decided; but, in order to veil their disaffection and secure the means of reaching their armed countrymen in the North, they refused to move further to the southward, under pretence of requiring certain gratifications promised them, as they alleged, by Vitellius. Hordeonius, anxious and perplexed, granted at once what they demanded; but they immediately raised their demands, till they knew they could not be conceded. Refused, they openly declared that they would join Civilis at all hazards, confiding perhaps in the signs of weakness manifested by their commander. Hordeonius was indeed at a loss what course to take. At first he proposed to employ force, and march against them; again he shut himself up in his camp and would have let things take their course. His officers urged and almost compelled him to act, and at last he ordered Herennius Gallus, legate of the First legion, to close the road northward at Bonna, where he was stationed. At the same time he announced that he was about to follow the revolted squadrons in person, and co-operate with Gallus in crushing them between the two divisions of his army. Once more, however, the prefect abandoned his bolder counsels: the Batavians approaching Bonna sent to parley with Gallus, who, deserted by his chief, hesitated to interpose. Nevertheless his legion rushed forward to the combat, and might have overpowered the advancing Batavians, but for the defection of their Belgic auxiliaries. A third Roman force was thus beaten with disgrace, and driven behind its ramparts. Passing rapidly before the encampment, and leaving the Colonia Agrippinensis on their right, the victorious Batavians pressed resolutely forward, and with no further check effected a junction with the battalions of Civilis.<sup>1</sup>

Further disasters of the Romans.

The forces of the Gaulish champion now assumed the pro-

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 19, 20.



portions of a regular army; but though the liberty of Gaul and Germany was the common watchword of the confederates, he still chose to represent himself in parley with the Romans, as a partisan of Vespasian.<sup>1</sup> He invited the legions of Vetera to take the oath to the same emperor to whom, as he declared, he had sworn his own auxiliary detachments. But the Romans under Lupercus were faithful to Vitellius: they replied to the summons of the Batavians with indignant menaces, repaired their defences, and awaited the onset of his barbarians. They destroyed the town which had grown up beneath the walls of their encampment; they stored their quarters with provisions pillaged from the country round, and resorted to all the means of military science to repel the attack of an enemy, well armed, well trained, and ably handled. The rebels assailed, the legionaries defended the camp with equal skill and obstinacy, but while anxiously expecting aid from their general, the Romans succeeded in maintaining their fortified position. One legion indeed, the Eighteenth, was despatched from the Upper province under Dillius Vocula; but Hordeonius still hesitated to put himself in motion. His own soldiers grew impatient, indignant, insubordinate. Letters reached him from Vespasian, inviting him to join his faction; but uproar spread through the ranks, and he could only read them in public in order to reject and condemn them, and send the courier who had brought them in chains to Vitellius.<sup>2</sup>

Active operations were necessary to confirm this pretence of zeal. Hordeonius began at last to march. At Bonna he was met by the reproaches of the defeated legionaries, who ascribed their disaster to his inactivity, or even to his bad faith. In reply, he recited the letters he had written to all parts of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, demanding assistance; and, to prove his author-

Civilis beleaguers the Roman station of Castra Vetera.

Mutinous riots among the Roman soldiery.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 21.: "Civilis, justī jam exercitus dūctor, sed consilii ambigens . . . cunctos in verba Vespasiani adigit."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 21-24.

ity, caused one of the murmurers to be put under arrest. From Bonna he proceeded to Colonia, the appointed rendezvous of the auxiliaries he had summoned to the standards of Vitellius. But the soldiers, full of ardour themselves, were disgusted with the weakness or treachery of their leader, and compelled him to relinquish the command to Vocula, whose promptness and fidelity seemed equally beyond question. This insubordination, however, as usual, was the harbinger of ill-success. The Roman forces, as they advanced towards Vetera, were harassed by scarceness of provisions; their pay was irregular; the distant states of Gaul were slack in remitting to them the men and money they required; the waters of the Rhine fell so low that their vessels could with difficulty continue their route down the stream, and the terrors of superstition, which beheld in this drought the anger of the gods, aggravated the hardships of their situation. Vocula now joined his forces to the Thirteenth legion at Novesium; but not feeling himself sufficiently strong to attempt the relief of Vetera, he employed and sought to animate his men with camp-exercises, and by the plunder of the Gugerni, who had taken part with Civilis. The hostile Germans were watching these proceedings from the other side of the Rhine. A vessel laden with corn happened to take ground in the shallow channel, and they prepared to bring it over to their own bank. Gallus, who had been left in camp at Gelduba, while Vocula was engaged in his foray, observing this movement, sent a cohort to prevent it. The Germans received succours, and a skirmish ensued, in which they gained the advantage, and succeeded in carrying off their prize. The beaten legionaries imputed ill-faith to their commanders; they dragged Gallus out of his tent, tore his robes, and struck him with many blows, demanding what price he had received for his treachery, and who were his associates in it. Thence they turned upon Hordeonius, who still remained, though divested of authority, in the camp, and threw him into chains, from which he was not released till Vocula's return. This chief had the power to restore obedi-

ence. He put the ringleaders in the mutiny to death. Such was the rapid change of feeling among the soldiers; so easily were they excited to sedition, so promptly restored to the instinct of military submission. While, in fact, the officers were for the most part well disposed towards Vespasian, as a brave and able captain, whose reputation pronounced him worthy of leading them, the men were generally attached to Vitellius, whom they knew, and liked perhaps for his largesses, or his remiss discipline. But as long as they could be made to believe that their chiefs were faithful to this favourite, they consented to execute their orders and endure their chastisements.<sup>1</sup>

The great mass of the German tribes, on either side of the Rhine, now attached themselves to the fortunes of Civilis; and a general attack was made, by his direction, upon the unfortunate Ubii, whose long fidelity to the Romans rendered them hateful to their less pliant compatriots. Their country between the Rhore and the Rhine—from Juliers to Bingen—was ravaged with fire and sword, except where it was under the immediate protection of the Roman garrisons; but the strong defences of Colonia defied the fury of the barbarians, and Civilis now collected all his energies for pressing the siege of Vetera, which he had kept throughout under strict blockade. The Batavians were charged with the service of the battering machines: the Germans from the right bank, more impetuous, and whose lives were held perhaps cheaper, were destined for the assault on the entrenchments. A furious attack was made; but the defence was steadily maintained, and through the darkness of the night, illumined only by the glare of torches and blazing ruins, both parties exhausted every effort of skill and bravery, till the despair rather than the science of the Romans gained the ascendancy. Civilis resumed the blockade, and contented himself with attempts to corrupt the enemy who had baffled his arms.<sup>2</sup>

The siege of  
Vetera turned  
into a blockade.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 25-27.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 30.

Such was the posture of affairs on the banks of the Rhine; when late in the autumn accounts arrived of the defeat of the Vitellians at Cremona, the proclamation of Vespasian by Primus, and the invitation of Cæcina to the remnant of the beaten party to accede to this change of government. Envoys sent to Civilis on the part of Vespasian. Hordeonius once more took upon himself to play the part of general, and required his legions to swear to the new Emperor. The Gaulish auxiliaries, indifferent in truth to either chief, made no difficulty in obeying; but the legionaries still hesitated. At last, when constrained to acquiesce, they pronounced the oath slowly and reluctantly, and slurred over the name of Vespasian with indistinct murmurs. From the Roman camps the envoys of Primus passed to the lines of Civilis, and claimed him as their master's avowed ally. The Batavian replied at first evasively; but the envoys were themselves Gauls, and he was emboldened, on further intercourse, to open to them the real object of the armed attitude he had assumed, recounting the sufferings and indignities he had undergone, and invoking them to join him in delivering their common country from the tyranny of the stranger. Their fate, he said, could not become worse than it already was; victory might restore them to liberty. With this he dismissed them, having succeeded, it would seem, in shaking their fidelity, and at least disposed them to conceal his own avowed hostility.<sup>1</sup>

Trusting that Vocula would be thrown off his guard by the false report of these emissaries, the Batavian now prepared to strike a furious blow. Still keeping watch in person before Vetera, he detached a body of picked troops, who, after surprising a Roman squadron in its quarters at Asciburgium, presented themselves before the camp so suddenly that Vocula had not time to make the usual address to his men, nor even to draw them out in battle array.<sup>2</sup> In such emergencies the Roman

He makes a sudden attack on the Romans.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Asciburgium, perhaps the modern Asburg, between Neuss and Xanten (Novesium and Vetera). *Smith's Dict. of Class. Geography.*

tactics allowed of but one manœuvre: the legionaries were mustered rapidly in the centre, the auxiliaries hastened to occupy the space on their flanks. From between the ranks of these ill-formed battalions the cavalry charged the foe; but the Germans received them with steady valour, and drove them back on their own lines. The Romans were shaken by the rebound, and cut down by the advancing Germans with great slaughter: at the same moment the Nervian cohorts went over to their countrymen, and left one flank of the legionaries unprotected. Assailed on two sides, the troops of Vocula broke and fled, leaving their colours behind them, and were chased to their entrenchments. The day would have ended in the destruction of the routed army, but for the arrival of some cohorts of Vascon auxiliaries, whose slender strength was unknown to the excited victors, and whom they supposed to be the van of a long column from Novesium or Moguntiacum. The Germans were ultimately driven back, with the sacrifice of their most forward warriors; but their horsemen carried off the standards and captives. The Romans lost the greater number in the action, but the Germans lost their best men.<sup>1</sup>

Civilis and Vocula had both made mistakes. The one ought to have supported so daring an attack with a larger force, in which case the appearance of a few auxiliaries would not have turned the fortune of the day: the negligence of the other, and the case with which he had suffered himself to be deceived by imperfect information, were unpardonable; nor did he now take advantage of his assailant's discouragement to raise the blockade of Vetera. Civilis had notified to the besieged that he had gained a great victory: they might the more readily believe him when they saw the captives and the standards he paraded before their walls. But one of the prisoners exclaimed with a loud voice that the Romans were really the conquerors; and though the brave soldier was im-

Success of the  
Romans, and  
momentary re-  
lief of Vetera.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 33.

mediately cut down by his captors, his countrymen took heart from the assurance thus conveyed to them. At the same moment the flames of burning villages betokened the advance of the legions to their relief. Vocula, on arriving at the spot, ordered his men to entrench a camp for their baggage, preparatory to the attack; but they were impatient of labour and eager for the fray, and with menacing cries compelled him to launch them, in loose marching order, upon the enemy. Civilis received them gallantly: he trusted to the blunders of his assailant as much as to his own prowess. The mutinous Romans had lost, indeed, with their discipline no slight portion of their courage. They would have been speedily overpowered; but, at their cry for succour, their besieged comrades poured forth, and the brave Batavian happening to be thrown to the ground by his horse falling, both sides believed him slain. The Germans paused in consternation; the Romans redoubled blow on blow with renewed vigour. Vetera was effectually relieved; but Vocula again neglected to follow up his victory, contenting himself with strengthening the defences now no longer threatened. He was suspected, nor, it is said, unjustly, of a corrupt understanding with the enemy. Though he strengthened the works of Vetera, he drafted a thousand men from the legion which held it, and withdrew his forces successively to Gelduba and Novesium. Want of provisions may have urged him thus to reduce the garrison, for the country was ravaged far and near, and the Germans commanded the stream of the Rhine. Moreover the baggage and crowds of sick, wounded, and unarmed, who were to be removed to the safer station of Novesium, required a considerable escort; and finally great numbers of the garrison demanded imperiously to be relieved from the hardships they had so long endured within the lines, while those who were left behind complained that they were deserted.<sup>1</sup>

The forces of Civilis closed once more round the devoted

entrenchments, while Vocula made the best of his way to Gelduba and Novesium. He gained the advantage in a skirmish of cavalry on the way, but this success did not improve the temper and conduct of his unsteady battalions. When divisions from several legions were reunited at Novesium, hearing that treasure had been sent to the camp by Vitellius, they combined to demand a donative. Hordeonius consented to surrender the contents of his chest, but only in the name of Vespasian. The soldiers divided the money, ate and drank, filled the camp with uproar, met in crowds at night, and finally, remembering their old grudge against their general, burst into his tent, dragged him from his couch, and slew him. Vocula would have suffered the same fate, had he not escaped in the garb of a slave. Left without a commander the soldiers lost all discipline. They sent some of their officers to implore aid from the Gaulish states; but in the meanwhile the army itself broke up into sections; the men of the Upper province separated themselves from those of the Lower; both retreated, or rather fled in disorder before Civilis, who was hastening to attack them. Some cohorts insisted on replacing the images of Vitellius in the Belgian camps and cities, though Vitellius was now known to be dead. Finally the men of the First, the Fourth, and the Eighteenth legions, who belonged to the army of the Upper province, put themselves again under Vocula's orders, and allowed him to lead them to the relief of Moguntiacum; which was surrounded by a swarm of Germans from the Mayn and Neckar. That important post was thus saved to the empire. But the barbarians had spread themselves far inland on the left bank of the Rhine, and the Treviri, abandoned by their Roman defenders, were obliged to fight for their own homes, and protect their country with a long line of wall and entrenchment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 36, 37.: "Loricam vallumque per fines suos Treviri struxere." The lorica, in this place, as I understand it, a continuous wall running along the ridge of a mound, is well illustrated from Q. Curtius (ix. 4.) by Steininger, *Gesch. der Trevirer*, p. 187.: "Angusta muri corona erat: non pinnas

Had the news of Vitellius' death reached the seat of war a little sooner, the great fortress of Moguntiacum, the firmest stronghold of the Roman power in the North, would in all probability have been lost. When Antonius Primus, a Gaul of Tolosa, standing Triumphant anticipations of the revolted Gauls. amid the ruins of the Capitol, proclaimed that the empire had passed away from the puppet of the Rhenish legions, there arose a cry throughout the Transalpine province that Rome's conquering destiny was broken, and the shrine of her invincible gods, which the Gauls, when they burnt the city, had been unable to storm, had fallen by the hands of the Romans themselves. The outposts of the empire on the Danube, it was affirmed, were besieged by the Dacians and Sarmatians: a great revolt was announced in Britain: the Druids, raising once more their venerable heads, declared that the dominion of the world was passing to the Gauls, to the race whose conquering hordes had peopled Britain, had occupied Spain, had colonized Italy, overrun Greece, and founded states under the shadow of the Caucasus.<sup>1</sup> It was pretended moreover that certain Gaulish chiefs, whom Otho had armed against Vitellius, had vowed, should Roman affairs fall hopelessly into confusion, *not to be wanting* to the liberation of their country.<sup>2</sup>

Before the death of Hordeonius Flaccus nothing had occurred to unmask their secret anticipations. But when the legionaries had actually slain their general, when the provincials, abandoned by their protectors, were forced to cling together for their own defence, Civilis felt that his time was come, and Civilis communicates with disaffected auxiliaries in the Roman camp.

(battlements) sicut alibi fastigium ejus distinxerant; sed perpetua lorica obducta transitum sepecebat." Steinhinger, however, himself regards the lorica and vallum as distinct lines of fortification, which he traces along the hills on the left side of the Moselle valley, from near Trèves to Andernach.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 54.: "Captam olim a Gallis Urbem, sed integra Jovis sede mansisse imperium: fatali nunc igne signum cœlestis iræ datum, et possessionem rerum humanarum Transalpinis gentibus portendi, superstitione vana Druidæ canebant." Tacitus has skilfully brought in this account immediately after his narrative of the destruction of the Capitol.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. l. c.: "Pepigisse ne deessent libertati."



began to communicate his views to Classicus, a Gaulish officer commanding a squadron of Treviri. In the conferences between them two other Gauls of distinction took part, Julius Tutor, a Treviran, and Julius Sabinus, a Lingon, who, while conspiring for the independence of Gaul, affected to boast his descent from Julius Cæsar, the bravest of the Romans. These men had frequent meetings at Colonia, but in private, for the Ubii generally retained their fidelity to Rome. They sounded the disposition of the auxiliaries, and of the tribes around them, and pledged themselves to the liberation of their common country, convinced that when once the passes of the Alps were closed against the invader, the Gaulish states might concert among themselves what limits they would set to their power.<sup>1</sup> Then, returning to their quarters, they joined as before the standards of Vocula, who now moved again down the Rhine to succour the troops still blockaded at Vetera. They were only watching their opportunity. Suddenly they quitted the ranks with their divisions, and entrenched themselves at a distance. Neither threats nor entreaties could induce them to return. Vocula was not strong enough to enforce obedience, and retired in perplexity to Novesium. Meanwhile the legionaries themselves wavered in their fidelity. The death of Vitellius, the accession of Vespasian, the disorders of the empire, all combined to alarm them; and, Gauls as they were by birth, or Gallicized by their long sojourn on Gaulish soil, they were persuaded to the crime never before conceived by Roman legionaries, of *swearing the oath of the stranger*.<sup>2</sup> Vocula, driven to despair by this defection of his soldiers, was only prevented by his attendants from despatching himself; but his life was shortly taken by the emissaries of Classicus. The officers next to him in command, Numisius and Gallus, were thrown into chains, and carried to the camp of Civilis. Legionaries

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 55.: "Si Alpes præsidiiis firmentur, coalita libertate, dispecturas Gallias quem virium suarum terminum velint."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 57.: "Ut, flagitium incognitum, Romanus exercitus in eterna verba juraret."

and auxiliaries united in one body with the host of Germans and Batavians, and all pledged themselves together to the empire of the Gauls.<sup>1</sup> The garrison of Vetera, the remnant of the army of the Lower province, were once more summoned to surrender. Hopeless of relief, reduced in numbers, and driven to extremity by famine, they accepted terms of capitulation. Their lives were promised them; but they were required to swear the Gaulish oath, and surrender their camp to pillage. After this humiliation they were led beyond the Gaulish lines, still menaced and insulted by their conductors; but at five miles' distance from the scene of their brave defence they were attacked by the faithless foe, and put to the sword. After thus absorbing one Roman army, and utterly destroying another, Civilis cut the long ruddy locks, which he had vowed to let grow untrimmed till he should consummate his vengeance on the enemies of his country.<sup>2</sup>

Capitulation and treacherous massacre of the garrison of Vetera.

The Roman power was thus suddenly overthrown along the whole bank of the Rhine; and all the camps and military stations of the legions were destroyed, with the exception of Moguntiacum, and Vindonissa at the entrance of the Helvetian territory, which it seems were still occupied by weak and trembling garrisons. A wing of the captured Sixteenth broke away and took refuge in Moguntiacum; the main body was marched under Gaulish colours to the city of the Treviri, and exhibited to the people in token of the complete victory their champions had obtained for them. The German allies of Civilis urged him to destroy the colony of Agrippina, which they justly regarded as a standing menace to their

Civilis seeks to form a German sovereignty at Colonia Agrippinensis.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 59.: "Juravere, qui aderant, pro imperio Galliarum."

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 55-61. As in his account of the British insurrection, so in this also, Tacitus is generally reticent as to the atrocities committed, we must presume, by semi-barbarians, with arms in their hands, excited by the superiority suddenly acquired over the people before whom they were used to tremble. He adds, however, here a report that Civilis set up some of his captives for his child to shoot at.

nation. But to this measure their chief would not consent. From no motive of humanity, it may be presumed, nor to gain a reputation for clemency, but reserving the place for the central stronghold of his own power; for it was observed that he had never himself pronounced, nor suffered his Batavians to pronounce, the oath to the Gaulish empire, and he contemplated putting himself at the head of a confederacy

His deference  
to the German  
prophetess  
Veleda.

of German tribes on either side of the Rhine. With this view he paid court to Veleda, the virgin queen and priestess of the Bructeri, who dwelt aloof in a tower on the Lippe, and whom they were wont to consult and worship with superstitious awe.<sup>1</sup> To her he had sent Lupercus, the choicest of his captives, as a pledge of the triumph she had promised him; slain by his attendants on the way, the Roman general escaped the more solemn sacrifice to which he had probably been destined. Civilis showed no disposition to advance further to pursue or meet the Romans. He was intent on consolidating his authority in the regions his arms had already won. Sabinus, more bold, or more impatient, led his forces into the country of the Sequani; but while affecting to war for the independence of Gaul, he had himself assumed the title of Cæsar, and was surprised to find the people indifferent to what ap-

Julius Sabinus  
defeated by the  
Sequani.

peared to them a mere change of masters. Tribe was marshalled against tribe, and the result was a victory of the Sequani over the Lingones. Sabinus himself showed neither courage nor conduct. Flying from the field at the first turn of fortune, he made his way to a neighbouring farm house, and set it on fire, while he escaped into the woods, to make it appear that he had destroyed himself. The stratagem succeeded; he was supposed to be dead, and soon forgotten by both parties; but we shall

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 61. Comp. *Germ.* 8.: "Veledam diu apud plerosque numinis loco habitam." Not Veleda only, but Aurinia, and other women, had been venerated by the superstition of the Germans as goddesses. "Inesse quin etiam sanctum aliquid et providum putant; nec aut consilia earum aspernantur, aut responsa negligunt." Comp. Cæsar, *Bell. Gall.* i. 50.

presently hear of him again in an affecting story which gives more interest to his name, than, from his character, it deserves.<sup>1</sup>

The Flavian generals had not yet drawn breath from the efforts and anxieties of the war in Italy, when they were appalled by the report of so many legions lost and so many provinces revolted in the North. **Mucianus** may have felt these disasters more bitterly, when he reflected that he had himself encouraged **Civilis** to rise in **Vespasian's** name against the defenders of the empire, and that the **Batavian** had only bettered the lesson in perfidy which he had taught him. But this was not a moment for vain regrets. It was necessary to strengthen by the presence of an imposing force the **Transalpine** states which still leaned to the side of **Rome**. In **Gaul** no Roman forces were left. Two legions of the victorious Flavian army, the Eighth and the Eleventh, were immediately sent forward from Italy. These were accompanied by one of the most recently levied of the **Vitellian** legions, the Twenty-first. The Sixth and Tenth were summoned from **Spain**, and the Fourteenth recalled from **Britain**. The command of these divisions when combined was assigned to **Petilius Cerialis**, an experienced but not an active general, already known to us from the wars in **Britain**; and **Domitian** himself followed in their rear, to reap the glory of their success, if not to share their perils in person. As soon as it was known that forces so considerable were converging on the theatre of war, the patriotic fervour of the **Gauls** signally abated. Deputies from various states assembled in the territory of the **Remi**, a people who from the first had shown a disposition to acquiesce in the foreign domination. The decision of this congress was quickly taken. The **Treviri** were required to lay down their arms, and seek by prompt submission the pardon which further resistance might render unattainable. **Valentinus**, the envoy from this tribe, who

Fresh forces directed upon Gaul from Rome by Mucianus and Domitian.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 61-67.

still gave his voice for war, and dissuaded his countrymen from obeying this mandate, lost in arguing and haranguing the time which should have been devoted to active preparations. Civilis was wasting his strength in trifling expeditions; Classicus was supine; and Tutor neglected to seize the passes of the Alps, and guard the gates of Upper Germany. The fairest chance ever offered to a province for recovering its liberty was lost, it would seem, by the inefficiency of its self-constituted champions. While the Gauls were trifling the Romans were acting with an energy which, even at this distance of time, cannot but strike us with awe. Such men were indeed their own destiny. Day by day, and month by month, the legions advanced, tramping eight hundred thousand paces along the marble roads of the empire. They traversed half the length of Italy to the foot of the Alps. There they divided into two bodies; one took the route of the Graian mountains into the heart of Gaul; the other scaled the walls of the Great St. Bernard, alighted on the Lemman Lake, skirted its eastern extremity to Viviscus or Vevay, and from thence, still following the beaten track of four generations of conquerors, climbed the northern ridge of that hollow basin, and descended again to Aventicum in the valley of the Aar. The descent was now easy, and every omen favourable. At Vindomissa the avenging army was met by auxiliaries who had penetrated Helvetia by the passes of the Splugen, and it swept along, in its onward march, allies from Rætia and Brigantia. Thus reinforced, the Twenty-first legion, under Sextilius Felix, entered Upper Germany by the valley of the Rhine.<sup>1</sup> When Tutor sent against it some of the revolted legionaries, who had taken service with the Gauls, these dastardly soldiers returned, with a second treachery, to the eagles again. He retired, keeping clear of

The Gauls neglect to defend the entrance into their country.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 70.: "Cum auxiliaribus cohortibus per Rhetiam inrupere: accepit ala singularium . . . præerat Julius Briganticus." This native chief was, I conceive, from his name, from Bregenz on the lake of Constance. I venture to coin an appellation for his country.

Moguntiacum with its little Roman garrison, and occupied Bingium, where he hoped to be able to maintain himself by breaking the bridge over the Nahe, which flows before it. But the Romans swam or waded the stream, attacked him in his unfortified position, and easily routed his disconcerted militia. The spirit of the Treviri, long reduced to inactivity by the policy of their conquerors, was broken by one defeat. Their warriors threw away their arms, and dispersed; their chiefs for the most part hastened to submit. The Vitellian legions, which, after joining the standard of Civilis, had been quartered among them, swore of their own accord in the name of Vespasian, but still refrained from offering him their arms, and retired moodily to a distance.<sup>1</sup>

Successes of  
the Romans.

At this crisis there seems to have been some delay in the movements of the Romans. Possibly their forces, collected from such distant quarters, were not yet concentrated. Valentinus exerted all his influence to revive the courage of the Treviri, and assisted Tutor in rallying a remnant of his followers to the combat. Cerialis at last reached Moguntiacum at the head of a powerful army. Such was his confidence in the numbers of his legionary force, that he dismissed his auxiliaries to their own homes, a token of strength which had great moral effect far and near. He then ascended the valley of the Moselle, attacked and defeated the Trevirans in a brilliant action at Rigodulum, and captured Valentinus. The colony of Galba opened its gates in mingled hope and fear. The soldiers, intent only on plunder, demanded that the city, the capital of northern Gaul, should be abandoned to pillage; and Cerialis deserves credit for firmness in disappointing their licentious passions. This victory completed the conversion of the revolted legionaries, all of whom pressed forward, penitent and humble, to salute the triumphant eagles. The Treviri, the Remi, the Lingones,

Petilius Cerialis enters Trèves, and receives the submission of the revolted legionaries.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 70

all the nations in the rear of the Roman camps, had now returned to their allegiance. Cerialis condescended to reason with them on their folly in murmuring against the prudent and paternal government of which he was the minister. He reminded them not only that the career of military honours was open to them, in common with the citizens of Rome itself, but that the tribute they must pay to Rome was not heavier than would be required to maintain their own independence; that under a good emperor, they would enjoy all the benefits of his wisdom and moderation, while under a bad one, as bad there must sometimes be, just as there must sometimes be droughts and famines in the natural world, they at least, as the furthest removed from Rome, would suffer last and lightest.<sup>1</sup> It had been better perhaps to have referred them to their own past history, and convinced them that freedom had hitherto brought them no blessing, had procured them neither greatness of mind nor material civilization; that under the sway of their priests and nobles, they had acquired the vices of the most corrupt, and retained the barbarity of the rudest state of society: Children cannot govern themselves, and the Gauls had shown themselves as incapable of self-government as children.<sup>2</sup>

Civilis and Classicus, now acting together in the crisis of their peril, resorted to artifice, and tried to damp the ardour of Cerialis by representing that Vespasian, according to their private accounts, was dead; that Mucianus and Domitian, without the substance of his authority, were mere shadows; that an opportunity

Operations in  
the country of  
the Treviri.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 74.: "Quomodo sterilitatem aut nimios imbres et cætera naturæ mala, ita luxum vel avaritiam dominantium tolerate."

<sup>2</sup> In the fine speech here given to Cerialis, Tacitus is, in fact, accounting to his own conscience for the selfish tyranny of his countrymen. "Nam pulsus, quod Di prohibeant, Romanis, quid aliud quam bella omnium inter se gentium existent? Octingentorum annorum factura disciplinaque compages hæc coæluit, quæ convelli sine exitio convellentium non potest." We must admit in the case of the Romans, as promptly as in our own, that the supineness of the mass of their subjects in the prospect of throwing off the yoke, speaks favourably for its easiness and mildness.

was now offered him, as the chief military power in Gaul, to make himself supreme over the nation: to this they for their parts would make no opposition, content to be left in possession of the Batavian and German territories, on which their own camps were planted. But Cerialis was not to be seduced. He vouchsafed no reply to the rebels, while he sent their envoys at once to Domitian as a pledge of his fidelity. He was now intent on fortifying the positions he had won; but he was not strong enough to prevent the junction of the bands of Gauls and Germans who continued still to flock to the standard of the patriots. Civilis would have protracted the war to await an expected invasion from the eastern bank of the Rhine: but Classicius and Tutor represented the weakness of the Roman forces at this moment, and the policy of anticipating the arrival of fresh succours from Spain and Britain. It was determined to attack without delay the Roman camp, entrenched outside the walls of Trèves, on the further bank of the Moselle. The legions were exposed to imminent danger, for they were taken by surprise, and their commander himself, who had carelessly passed the night beyond the lines, was absent at the moment of the assault. The bridge which connected the city with its suburb, and thence with their camp, was burnt by the assailants. At the same instant their rampart was scaled, some squadrons of cavalry were routed; and great were the havoc and disorder, when Cerialis at last appeared amongst them, and, unarmed and uncovered as he was, by prayers, threats, and almost by main force, stopped their flight, and rallied them to the combat. Amidst the tents and baggage neither Roman nor German leaders could set their forces in array, and for a long time the conflict was maintained pell-mell by personal skill and courage. At last the Twenty-first legion made itself room to form, sustained the broken and yielding masses of its comrades, and gave them time to recover, when the fury of the barbarians received a check, and the historian declares, in an access of unusual fervour, that, by the aid of Providence alone, the victors of the morn-



ing were finally vanquished. By the promptness with which he followed up his success, pursuing the routed Germans and destroying their camp, Cerialis retrieved the reputation his supineness had nearly forfeited. The confederates were attacked in the rear by the people of Colonia, who gave up to the Romans the wife and children of Civilis. The fugitives were harassed, and cut up in all directions. Another danger impended on their flank. The Fourteenth legion was on its way from the shores of Britain. The Caninefates manned their vessels, and put out to sea to intercept it; but these succours reached the land, and the men had been already disembarked and sent forward when their transports were attacked, and sunk or disabled. Some successful skirmishes still kept up the failing courage of the allies, but the toils were closing around them, and step by step they were driven towards the island of the Batavians, the last precarious foothold of the boasted empire of the Gauls.<sup>1</sup>

Once more, and once only, on the auspicious field of Vetera, Civilis turned at bay, and drew forth all his forces for a desperate encounter. The soil in his front was marshy, and he had thrown into it a copious stream of water from the Rhine, by driving a mound obliquely into the channel of the river. Here, he conceived, the greater strength and stature of the Germans, and their skill in swimming, would give them a notable advantage; and so indeed it proved, the battle being long contested with loss and risk to the Romans, whom Cerialis in vain excited by appeals to the pride of each legion in turn, to the Fourteenth as conquerors of Britain, to the Sixth as givers of the empire to Galba, to the legions of the Rhine as bulwarks of the Roman frontier. At last the treachery of a deserter disclosed to him a path in the morass by which a chosen band could surprise the right flank of the enemy. At the same moment a general charge was made on their front, and the Germans, pressed on two sides, were driven

Civilis is defeated before Vetera.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* iv. 77-79

headlong into the river on their left. Had the Roman flotilla been at hand, their whole force would have been utterly destroyed; but the crisis was still delayed, heavy rains checked the pursuit of the Roman cavalry, and, swimming, wading, or skulking from the field, the routed hordes effected their escape.<sup>1</sup>

Civilis had now crossed the Rhine, and thrown himself into the territory of his German allies, the Chauci and the Frisii. He abandoned the line of the Wahal, and the defence of the Batavian island, and after Civilis crosses the Rhine. carrying off his corn and cattle, cut the dams with which Drusus had confined the ancient channel of the Rhine, and laid the country far and wide under water.<sup>2</sup> Behind this new frontier he still maintained an imposing force, swelled by a crowd of Treviran fugitives, among whom were, it was said, one hundred and thirteen of their senators.<sup>3</sup> The Romans were threatening his position from several points. He divided his troops into four detachments, and attacked them simultaneously at Arenacum, Batavodurum, Grinnes and Vada.<sup>4</sup> Everywhere he was repulsed; but the Romans again had no ships to complete their victory. The Germans, who had probably greater command of the river, made a night attack in boats on the camp at Novesium; and here once more the want of vigilance of Cerialis, who was passing the night in an intrigue with a native woman, had nearly proved

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 14-18.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 19: "Quin et diruit molem a Druso Germanico factam, Rhenumque promo alveo in Galliam ruentem, disjectis quæ morabantur, effudit. Sic velut abacto amne, tenuis alveus insulam inter Germanosque continentium terrarum speciem fecerat." When Drusus opened the channel into the lake Flevis, he nearly drained the old channel by Lagdunum (alter Rhein), thus effacing the separation between the island on the southern or Gaulish bank and the German continent on the northern. Such seems to be the meaning of a passage which has caused much perplexity to the commentators.

<sup>3</sup> By senators we are to understand decurions of the Roman colony. Steininger, *Geogr. der Treverer*, p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> Arenacum is supposed, from its name perhaps, to be Arnheim. If so, it was not on the Wahal, but on the old Rhine, and the Romans, we thus see, had now occupied the "Island." The other places are quite uncertain.

fatal to the Romans.<sup>1</sup> The Germans made prize of the prætorian galley, in which they hoped to have captured the general himself, and bore it off as an offering to their priest-

ess Veleda. Meanwhile the Romans, who had  
The Romans occupy the "Island." occupied the Batavian villages between the

Wahal and Rhine, ostentatiously spared the private estates of Civilis; and this, with the repeated failure of his operations, threw suspicion on his earnestness in the cause. He had boasted that, should the foe dare to set foot within the island, he would instantly crush them; but this vaunt he did not attempt to execute. The allies had urged him to finish the war by a decisive engagement; but he had restrained their ardour, and divided their forces. The suspicion was not without colour and reason. Civilis was negotiating with the Romans. To them he set forth, it seems, as merits, the very same acts of perfidy with which

his countrymen had reproached him. In making  
Civilis treats with the Romans. terms for himself, he may have stipulated for his people also; and Cerialis was fain to admit the

transparent pretence that they had taken up arms, not against the majesty of Rome; but for the empire of Vespasian. Civilis was allowed to rank himself among the partisans of the new government, with Mucianus, Primus, and Cerialis himself. The Germans of the right bank were thus abandoned by the chief they had chosen, and the sullen acknowledgment they made of the superior fortune of the Romans, seems to have been accepted as a submission by their weary and exhausted conquerors.<sup>2</sup> Domitian and Mucianus had not advanced further than Lugdunum on the Rhone, when the news of this pacification reached them, and the young prince

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus speaks of the camps at Novesium and Bonna, and does not specify on which the attack was made. I should have supposed he meant Bonna, from the mention of the general's paramour, Claudia Sacrata, as an Ubian: but the German boats, he says, *descended* the river, which can hardly be reconciled with a locality so high up the stream.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 23-26.

could return to Rome with his share of laurels, to greet his brother's triumphal entry from Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

The narrative of Tacitus, such as it has descended to us, breaks off in the middle of the speech with which Civilis is supposed to plead his cause with the Romans.

No monument of antiquity remains to inform us of the Batavian's further career, or what faith

The narrative  
of Tacitus in-  
terrupted.

was kept with a foe who had proved himself more dangerous to Rome than Caractacus or Arminius. They had defended their own country against the invader; but Civilis had invaded the empire, and almost succeeded in wresting from it the most precious of its provinces, the nursery of its amplest resources and its bravest auxiliaries. The account our historian has given us of this memorable mutiny—for it is as a military, not a national revolt that we must evidently regard it—seems on the whole, one of the least successful episodes in his history; it leaves but an indistinct impression of the strength of the opposing forces, of the localities, and even the incidents of which it treats; but it fails still more remarkably in representing to us the character of the chief actor in the scene. Civilis, prominent as he was for a moment on the world's stage, prominent as he must always be on the page of history, remains to us a name only. He stands before us without national or personal characteristics, without even the mythical halo

The end of Ci-  
vilis unknown.

which surrounds the figure of Arminius; and we part from him at last quite content to be ignorant of what finally became of him, or whether he was really a traitor, or only unfortunate. Nor do we learn, nor do we care to inquire, what became of his still more shadowy associates, Classicus and Tutor; whether they were included in their chief's capit-

<sup>1</sup> According to Suetonius, Domitian's object in making his expedition into Gaul was to rival the exploits of Titus. It was popularly rumoured that he tampered with Cerialis to get himself proclaimed emperor by the army. His successes, such as they were, gained him at least the compliment of a spirited address in the poem of Silius Italicus (iii. 608.):

"Jam puer auricomus præformidat Batavo."

ulation, or suffered in the proscription which surely followed, however slight are its traces, of the leaders in the crushed sedition. Upon one only of the names mentioned in this narrative a ray of interest has alighted, from an anecdote preserved by Dion, and related with greater pathos by Plutarch. Julius Sabinus, it has been said, concealed himself after his defeat. He caused a trusty slave to fire his house, and gave out that he had perished in the flames. The story obtained credit, and search ceased to be made for him, while he concealed himself in a cave in a deep forest. To his faithful spouse, Eponina, he contrived to communicate the secret. She joined him in his retreat, and continued there to live with him for the space of nine years, interrupted only by her journeys, even as far as Rome, to consult with his friends, and learn if it might be possible to procure his pardon. In that hiding-place she bore her husband two sons, and at last the whole party ventured to present themselves together to the emperor. Eponina told the affecting story of her conjugal devotion, and showing the pledges of her love, declared that she had endured to bear them in the misery and darkness, that the suppliants for mercy might be the more in number. But Vespasian, it is said, was utterly unmoved. He pitilessly commanded the execution of both husband and wife. Eponina exclaimed that it was a happier lot to die than to live in the guilty enjoyment of his blood-stained sovereignty.<sup>1</sup>

*Such, says an eloquent Frenchman, was the last blood shed for the cause of ancient Gaul, the last act of devotion to a social order, a government, a religion, the return of which*

<sup>1</sup> Dion, lxi. 3.; Plutarch, *Amator.* p. 770. It may be some relief to the reader to know that this story, one of the most pathetic in Roman annals, seems liable to great suspicion. Dion intimates that both the husband and wife were sacrificed. Plutarch speaks only of Eponina. There could be no motive for such barbarity towards the contemptible Sabinus, except as a pretender to the blood of the Julii. This feeling would have been as strong against the children as their father; but according to Plutarch, the son certainly survived, and he had himself seen one of them at Delphi, filling probably the official dignity of the priesthood. Yet it is hardly worth while to pluck the story of the individ-

*was neither possible nor desirable.*<sup>1</sup> The narrative now concluded sufficiently shows that national spirit had already become extinct among the Gaulish people. It was not from their own forests, or stockades, still less from their cities, that the last heroes of resistance to Rome had sprung. Civilis and Tutor, Classicus and Sabinus, were all officers attached to the Roman armies; they had learned the art of war under Roman training, and their ideas of national government were only a faint reflex of the Roman. Their aim at self-aggrandizement was hardly in any case disguised; yet the imperfect sympathies of their countrymen were in no wise shocked by it. We trace in their attempt no germ of a self-evolving and self-sustaining power. The two great elements of Gaulish nationality, the nobility and the priesthood, had been absorbed by the spirit of assimilation to Rome. The nobles were content to be centurions and tribunes: the Druids rejoiced in the pensions and titles of Augurs and Flamens.<sup>2</sup> We shall hear no more of either the one or the other. Occasions will occur when Gaul will again play a great part in Roman history; but it will be only the Gaul of the camp. The empire of Rome will be won and lost by Gaulish hands; but they will be the hands of trained auxiliaries, with all the

ual from the mass of suffering which the historian of these times must record, and, with Lucan at Pharsalia, I often mutter, amidst the horrors I have undertaken to relate,

“Mors nulla querela

Digna sua est; nullosque hominum lugere vacamus. . . .

Per populos hic Roma perit.”

Thierry, *Gaulois*, iii. in fin.

<sup>1</sup> Thierry refers to the notices of the professors at Burdigala by Ausonius (iv. x.). In the fourth century the Gaulish priests of Apollo remembered without remorse that they were descended from the priests of Belenus. The number of Gauls we find with sacerdotal names deserves remark. Thus we have Julius Sacrovir, Julius Auspex, Claudia Sacrata. It seems probable that these appellations indicated the Druidical functions or descent of their bearers. Other cognomens, such as Civilis, Tutor, and Classicus, seem to be Gaulish appellations Latinized; at least we shall hardly meet with them among the genuine Romans.

feelings, and even with the title of Romans. We have traced in this history the fall of Gallic independence between the eras of Cæsar and Vespasian: we have seen a great people conquered and extinguished. We now turn to another picture, that of the fall of Jewish independence, protracted through the same period: we shall see there also a great nation conquered and crushed; but the Jews, at least, have never suffered extinction.

## CHAPTER LIX.

**NATIVITY OF THE JEWISH NATION: ITS MATERIAL PROSPERITY: DISCONTENT WITH ITS POSITION.—RESISTANCE OF BRIGANDS OR FALSE CHRISTI.—TUMULTS IN JERUSALEM CONTROLLED BY THE SANHEDRIM.—INSURRECTION IN GALILEE QUÉLLED (A. D. 52).—FELIX, GOVERNOR OF JUDEA.—AGRIPPA A SPY ON THE JEWS.—INSURRECTION AND DEFEAT OF CESTIUS GALLUS (A. D. 66).—VESPASIAN TAKES THE COMMAND.—JEWISH FACTIONS: THE MODERATES AND THE ZEALOTS.—JOSEPHUS THE HISTORIAN COMMANDS IN GALILEE.—HIS DEFENCE OF JOTAPATA (A. D. 67).—HE IS TAKEN, AND ATTACHES HIMSELF TO THE ROMANS.—REDUCTION OF GALILEE.—SECOND CAMPAIGN (A. D. 68).—REDUCTION OF PEREA.—SUSPENSION OF HOSTILITIES (A. D. 69).—ACCOUNT OF THE JEWS BY TACITUS: HIS ILLIBERAL DISPARAGEMENT OF THEM.—REVOLUTION IN JERUSALEM.—OVERTHROW OF THE MODERATE PARTY.—THE THREE CHIEFS OF THE ZEALOTS, JOHN, SIMON, AND ELEAZAR, AND STRIFE BETWEEN THEM.—TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM.—TITUS COMMENCES THE SIEGE (A. D. 70).—THE FIRST WALL STORMED.—ROMAN CIRCUMVALLATION.—FAMINE AND PORTENTS—ESCAPE OF THE CHRISTIANS.—CAPTURE OF THE CITADEL.—STORMING OF THE TEMPLE.—BURNING OF THE HOLY OF HOLIES.—FEEBLE DEFENCE OF THE UPPER CITY.—DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.—CAPTURE OF THE JEWISH CHIEFS.—FINAL REDUCTION OF JUDEA.—MASSACRES AND CONFISCATIONS.—TITUS RETURNS TO ROME.—TRIUMPH OVER JUDEA.—THE ARCH OF TITUS (A. D. 44–70. A. U. 797–823).**

**I**N commencing a chapter which will be devoted to the great insurrection of the Jews, ending in the destruction of their city and final subversion of their polity, it will be well to remark the distinction which existed between this people at the period we are considering, and all the other subjects of Rome.

The Jewish nation in the first century in the maturity of its powers.

The victorious republic had never yet, throughout the long career of its conquests, confronted a people in full strength and maturity. The Carthaginians, the Greeks, the Egyptians, and lastly the Gauls, had all passed their prime before the shock came, which broke them against the vigorous ado-



lence of the republic. But such was not the case with the Jews. After all the losses and disasters inflicted on its political weakness, that extraordinary people was still growing in numbers, still advancing in moral influence. The narrow sphere of its natural frontiers, and the pressure of mighty empires on every side, had checked indeed its territorial extension. From David to Herod the bounds of Jewish occupation were still confined to the *peninsula* of Palestine; but the authority of Jewish ideas had made ample conquests beyond the ocean and the desert.<sup>1</sup> Outside the limits of Palestine the Jews, scattered in every city of the three continents, were not existing merely on sufferance. Strong in numbers, strong in national prejudices, stronger still in the force of their national character, they assumed everywhere an attitude more or less aggressive; not thrusting themselves indeed into political station, not coveting a share of the government, as long as they were suffered to manage their own affairs after their own fashion, but,—stranger, as it seemed, and more irritating,—seeking by all means to sway the minds of those about them, to wean them from their local prejudices, and inoculate them with a moral principle foreign to their own. Urged, apparently, in this unwonted career of proselytism by a blind instinct, they subjected themselves in every quarter to jealousy, and sometimes to persecution, such as had hitherto been almost unknown among heathen societies: but violence they had generally retaliated with equal vigour, till they had acquired in every city, from the Euphrates to the Nile and Tiber, a character, not perhaps wholly merited, for turbulence and seditiousness.

The advance of the Jewish people in material resources, within the limits of their proper country, was not less strongly marked at this epoch. The impetus given by the Roman conquests to eastern com-

Its material  
prosperity.

<sup>1</sup> David and Solomon (century xi. before Christ) had exacted tribute from various tribes as far as the Euphrates and the Red Sea (see 2 *Sam.* viii., 1 *Kings*, iv.); but this was the exercise of a transient authority, and implies no extension of national inhabitancy.

merce must have been keenly felt at the spot to which the traffic of Egypt, Syria, and Arabia, converged. The growth of a New City outside the walls of Jerusalem, the creation of traders and manufacturers, indicates a great industrial movement, and the magnificent constructions with which the elder Herod adorned the chief places of his dominions, not increasing, but, on the contrary, remitting at the same time, the burdens of his people, proves the fact still more decisively. Military training, no doubt, was checked among the Jews by the policy of the empire; but their youth were exempted, by special favour, from the ordinary waste of the conscription, and devoted without reserve to the labours of agriculture or commerce. The national heart beat as warmly and truly as ever. The old traditions were held in reverence; the Temple and its services frequented with all the ancient fervour; and in the direction now taken by its religious aspirations we discover a proof of the material prosperity of the nation. Worldly state was the invisible idol of the vacant fane of Jerusalem. The worship of wealth, grandeur, and dominion, blinded the Jews to the form of spiritual godliness; the rejection of the Saviour and the deification of Herod were parallel manifestations of the same engrossing delusion.

The national pride, thus fostered by outward circumstances, in which all classes were involved, was not incompatible with an antique simplicity of manners which bound them together, and gave a healthy vitality to the body politic. The tone of intercourse between the various ranks among the Jews, even in the days of which the New Testament treats, still savours strongly of the patriarchal; their methods of national government, so far as it was free to act, were paternal; more dependence was placed by their rulers on popular patriotism and affection than on strict arrangements of finance or of police; the social relations seem to have been unusually pure, those, above all, of master and servant were natural and kindly; slavery among the Jews was so confined in its ex-

*Its antique  
simplicity of  
manners.*

tent and so mild in practice, so guarded by law and custom, as to become a real source of strength instead of weakness to the commonwealth. The mutual interest which thus bound all classes together became a fulcrum for government, and when at last the nation rushed to arms, doubled the strength of its battalions.<sup>1</sup> The great rising of the Jews against the Romans, which is now to be related, was, beyond any other in ancient history, since the resistance at least of Greece to Xerxes, a common devotion to a common cause. The contest was that of a whole people (not indeed of all its members, but at least of every rank and every order) against a limited number of trained soldiers. The lesson, painful and humiliating, which it teaches us, stands alone perhaps in ancient, but has been repeated only too often in modern annals, that a nation in arms wages an unequal contest with skilful generals, disciplined legions, and abundant military resources.

Whatever were the causes which bound the Jews so closely together, and gave them such confidence in one another, such disregard for the rights and usages of the foreigner, it is important to observe that their spirit of self-assertion was not less manifest abroad than at home. We have seen what disturbances marked their sojourn in Alexandria; we have noticed the devices of expulsion which a mild and favourable ruler was induced to launch against them at Rome. Throughout the Western Empire they were at least controlled with vigour;

Attitude of the  
Jews in the  
West and in  
the East.

<sup>1</sup> Passages in the New Testament will occur to every reader to show how much the Jewish finance depended on voluntary contributions; how large a part the people themselves took in the administration and execution of their laws; how generally the menial was the "hired servant," not the slave of his master. This view of Jewish manners is fully borne out by Josephus. In the medley of classes which jostle together in his account of the insurrection, slaves have no place whatever. I am not sure that the term is so much as once mentioned in it. If I have not specifically alluded to the Mosaic arrangements for the periodical restitution of lands, and the cancelling of debts by personal service, which checked an undue accumulation of property, it is because we know not how far the Levitical law was actually in force at this period.

but in the East they defied the irregular police of the Parthians, made open war against the satraps of Babylonia, united themselves with the Syrians against the Greeks in those regions, and, a bolder and fiercer race than either, secured the victory to the party they espoused; until both Syrians and Greeks combined against them, and routed them with repeated slaughter. The Parthians, it seems, looked on in terror while these strangers, provoking or provoked, inundated their streets with blood. The Jews, worsted in the contest, seized on the cities of Nearda and Nisibis, and there continued to maintain themselves in half-acknowledged independence.<sup>1</sup>

The experience of Alexandria and Seleucia was not lost on the Roman government. The mildness with which the emperors, following the policy of Julius Cæsar, had generally treated the Jewish people, had not secured them against disturbances within the frontiers of Palestine, against the jealousy of its parties or the covert attempts of its princes to arm themselves in anticipation of a revolt. Agrippa was not allowed to complete the defences with which he had begun to encircle the most exposed front of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> This monarch left at his death four children. The eldest, a son, who bore his father's name, was at the time detained at Rome, and had completed his seventeenth year. The others were daughters: Berenice, aged sixteen, was already married to her uncle Herodes, king of the little territory of Chalcis; Mariamne was some years younger, and Drusilla a mere infant.<sup>3</sup> Claudius, ever attached to the traditions of his predecessors, would have sent the young Agrippa to assume his

Annexation of  
Judea to the  
Roman empire.

A. D. 44.  
A. U. 797.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xviii. 10. These events occurred in the reign of Caligula.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq.* xix. 7. 2. Comp. *Bell. Jud.* v. 4. 2., and Tac. *Hist.* v. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Berenice, according to the positive assertion of Josephus (*Antiq.* xix. 9.), was sixteen at the time of her father's death, A. U. 797. At a later period we shall remember this date with some surprise, and may be tempted to suspect the historian of an error.

father's diadem; but he was dissuaded by his ministers, pretending that a prince so young should not be trusted with power, but influenced more probably by the pressure of their friends' solicitations to surrender this wealthy province to the cohort of a Roman governor.<sup>1</sup> Judea and Samaria were now placed by decree of the senate in dependence on the proconsulate of Syria, and Cuspius Fadus was the first officer appointed to govern them, with the title of Cæsar's procurator. But the family of Agrippa, thus summarily disinherited, were treated with outward respect; the first duty enjoined on Fadus was to chastise the people of Cæsarea and Sebaste, for the insults they had vented against the memory of their late sovereign.

Immediately a swarm of Roman officials alighted on the fair fields of the long-promised land. The freedmen and favourites of the court reaped the first fruits of the anticipated harvest. The public revenues of the country were assigned to the imperial fiscus, and thus the interests of the emperor himself were identified with those of his agents and commissioners. The yoke of Cæsar might not be heavier than that of Herod; but it pressed in a new place; the burden, harshly shifted, was felt to be more galling. The priests and nobles murmured, intrigued, conspired; the rabble, bolder or more impatient, broke out into sedition, and followed every chief who offered to lead them to victory and independence. Theudas and Tholomeus, with many others,—brigands as they were styled by the Romans, Christs, elected and anointed by Jehovah, as they boldly proclaimed themselves, pointing to the Law and the Prophets of their sacred books as their title to divine support,—were routed in the field, or hunted through the wilderness, till one after another they were taken and slain.<sup>2</sup>

Resistance of  
the brigands or  
false Christs.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 9.: "Claudius, defunctis regibus aut ad modicum redactis, Judæam provinciam equitibus Romanis aut libertis permisit."

<sup>2</sup> For Theudas and Tholomeus, see Joseph. *Antiq.* xx. 1. 4. For the "Egyptian," *Acts*, xxi. 38.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xx. 6. 6. The term pseudo-Christ is applied to these pretenders in *Math.* xxix. 4., and thence adopted by the

Fadus was succeeded by Tiberius Alexander, against whom as a renegade from the national faith the Jews were the more embittered. Yet his defection was more than counterbalanced by the conversion to Judaism of Helena, queen of Adiabene, and her son Izates, whose territory, lying between Palestine and Parthia, might form a convenient link in the chain now secretly forging, to bind in strict alliance together the greatest rivals of Rome and the most reluctant of her subjects. The government of Tiberius was signalized by the capture and execution of Jacobus and Simon, sons of Judas the Galilean; but under Cumanus, who followed him, the populace of Jerusalem itself rose in frenzy against their masters, and the Roman soldiers were let loose with drawn swords upon them, in the midst of the holy season of Pass-over.<sup>1</sup> It was only indeed under extraordinary

provocation that the populace of the Jewish capital, who were generally controlled by the superior prudence of their chiefs, broke into

Tumults in Jerusalem controlled by the prudence of the Sanhedrim.

violence in the streets. In the Sanhedrim were many devoted adherents of Rome, and the rest were well aware of the weakness of the national power. All agreed in the sentiment of Caiaphas the high priest, when the multitude seemed ready for a moment to accept Jesus as the Christ: *If we let him alone all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation. . . It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.*<sup>2</sup> But the ruder independence of the Galileans was not so easily kept in check. Their tract of heath and mountain was always then, as it has

Fathers of the Church. Josephus calls them *ληστοί, ἀρχιληστοί, γόητες, ἀπατεῶνες*, and "false prophets," but never *ψευδόχριστοι*. He makes no more allusion to the false Christs than to the true Christ. The subject of the Messiah was one he shrank from contemplating in any shape. This may account for his silence about the persecution of the "Christians" by Nero at Rome, even supposing these to have included the turbulent Christ-seeking Jews.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq.* xx. 3. 4. The date is not precisely fixed, but may be A. D. 50 (A. U. 803).

<sup>2</sup> St. John's *Gospel*, xi. 48., Salvador, *Dom. Rom.* i. 493.

since always been, in a state of partial insurrection. The Roman authorities were constantly engaged in hunting down the banditti, who assumed the title of patriots, and gladly employed against them the local rivalry which nourished perpetual feud between the tribes of Galilee and Samaria. It was necessary for the inhabitants of the northern region to traverse Samaria on their periodical pilgrimages to Jerusalem. On such occasions they seldom escaped without insult, if not actual injury. The armed bands of Galilee would sometimes, in revenge, descend on the homesteads of Samaria, and harry the lands of men whom they accused of too great subservience to the foreigner. The Romans interfered.

Insurrection in  
Galilee quelled  
by Quadratus.

A. D. 52.  
A. U. 805.

Cumanus placed himself at the head of four cohorts with a force of Samaritan militia, attacked Eleazar, the Galilean chief, routed and put his followers to the sword. Again the Galileans rose with redoubled fury; the chiefs of Jerusalem in vain implored them to submit to inevitable fate. The Roman battalions were not always successful in their attacks on these desperate men. The war would have spread from canton to canton, and set the province in a flame, had not Quadratus, the prefect of Syria, interposed with the mass of his forces, trampled down all resistance with ferocious energy, and extinguished the quarrel of the provincial factions in the blood of a multitude of captives. The governor ascribed the disturbance to the rivalry of the Roman procurators. Cumanus presided in Galilee; Felix, the brother of the favourite Pallas, seems to have held independent authority in Samaria. Claudius, appealed to for instructions, left the decision to Quadratus, and he, well aware of the powerful interest of Felix, allowed the punishment, which should have been shared alike by both, to descend upon Cumanus only.<sup>1</sup> The whole territory of the Jewish people was now

Felix governor  
of Judea.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* xii. 54.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xx. 5-7 (A. D. 52, A. U. 805). There is some discrepancy in these statements, which are not, perhaps, irreconcilable. Of the government of Felix Tacitus had said (*Hist.* v. 9.): "E quibus Antonius Felix per omnem servitiam ac libidinem jus regum servilli ingenio exercuit, Drusilla Cleopatæ et Antonii nepte in matrimonium accepta."

united under the sway of Felix, who continued to enjoy his power, and accumulate riches, for many years after the death of his patron and the disgrace of his brother. His long reign is marked by repeated mention of the bandits and false prophets still infesting the province; the zeal for independence, rash and futile in its efforts, was still unabated; but in general, from the absence of public events which distinguishes the epoch, the country seems to have enjoyed comparative tranquillity. Claudius, before his death, gave the young Herod Agrippa the tetrarchy of Philip, consisting of some districts beyond Jordan, together with Trachonitis and Batanea. Drusilla was married to a prince of Emesa, a proselyte to Judaism; but Felix, becoming enamoured of her, did not scruple to carry her off from her husband. When he was at last recalled, the Jews took occasion to prefer complaints against him; but he was still protected by Nero, and notwithstanding the wealth he was supposed to have amassed, seems to have lived and died in uninterrupted prosperity.\*

The discreet and the timid still retained the chief influence in Jerusalem. The Romans had gained many adherents in every rank, especially among the priests and nobles, and divided the masses of the people, while they kept from their sight the young princes, who, as their natural leaders, might have combined them together. But on the frontiers of Syria, at this moment, the elements of commotion were more rife. Every pulsation of national feeling in Parthia and Armenia was communicated through the synagogues on the Tigris and Euphrates, and from station to station across the desert, to

The spirit of  
disaffection  
controlled by  
the vigorous  
measures of  
Corbulo.

\* Felix is supposed to have been procurator of Judea six years under Nero, from A. D. 54 to 60. Such is Salvador's statement; but the precise dates are not indicated by the historians. *Comp. Act. Apost.* xxix. 10. The Romans, it should be observed, gave the official name of Judea to the whole region of Palestine, including, besides, Judea proper, Galilee, Samaria, and Peræa.

† Josephus (*Antiq. Jud.* xx. 7. 8.) says that he was protected by the influence of his brother; but Pallas was disgraced as early as 56, though he was not put to death by Nero till 63. Felix had a son by Drusilla, named Agrippa. Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xx. 6. 2.



the centres of Jewish life at Jerusalem, Tiberias and Cæsarea. Full of scorn for the unwarlike character of Nero, full of hope in the unappeased discontent of the Jewish people, the Parthians were now making aggressions on the side of Armenia, which were in fact a blow to the honour and therewith to the influence of Rome. The imperial officers required the tributary chiefs on the frontier to arm on their behalf. Corbulo, the bravest of the Roman generals, was placed at the head of fresh forces; the disagreements which ensued between him and Quadratus ended in the dismissal of the prefect, and the union of the eastern provinces under the best man the empire could summon to their defence. The Jews watched the progress of military operations; and if dismayed at the defeat of the Parthians, they were reassured by the death of Corbulo which so speedily followed. But the work of this general of the ancient stamp, rapid as it was, remained firmly established. Corbulo had restored the discipline of the legions, long demoralized by the negligence of their chiefs, and the luxury of their Syrian cantonments. He had formed an army of veteran legions: he left the Third, the Fifth, the Tenth, and the Twelfth in full pride and vigour, to curb the discontent or turbulence which brooded over hopes of insurrection. And so thoroughly had he quelled the spirit of the Parthians, that, when three years after his death, the West was involved in universal confusion,—when the chiefs of the legions were hastening from all quarters to wrestle for the empire in Italy, when Gaul on one side, as we have seen, and Judea, as we are about to see, on the other, were at once in open revolt,—the hereditary foes of Rome still kept their swords in the scabbard, and neither gave aid to the insurgents, nor sought aggrandizement for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Felix, the procurator of Judea, was succeeded in 815 by Porcius Festus, who was carried off by sickness after a vig-

<sup>1</sup> This submission of the Parthians may be partly ascribed to a personal admiration conceived, as it would seem, by Vologesus for Nero, of which evidence has been given already. See above, chap. iv.

orous government of two years. Festus was followed by Albinus, and after another interval of two years, marked by no occurrence of moment, Gessius Florus undertook the control of the Jewish people; who were becoming daily more refractory. For their coercion the Romans had invented a peculiar machinery. To Agrippa, the tetrarch, for by this style we may best distinguish him, they had given the title of king of the sacrifices, in virtue of which he was suffered to reside in the palace at Jerusalem, and retain certain functions, fitted to impose on the imagination of the more ardent votaries of Jewish nationality. The palace of the Herods overlooked the Temple, and from its upper rooms the king could observe all that passed in that mart of business and intrigue. Placed, however, as a spy in this watch-tower, he was regarded by the Zealots, the faction of independence, as a foe to be baffled rather than a chief to be respected and honoured. They raised the walls of their sanctuary to shut out his view, and this, among other causes of discontent between the factions in the city, ripened to an enmity which presaged the expulsion of the king with all the friends of Rome about him, at the first outbreak of the now inevitable insurrection.<sup>1</sup>

The Romans employ Agrippa as a spy upon the Jews in Jerusalem.

And now was introduced into the divisions of this unhappy people a new feature of atrocity. The Zealots sought to terrify the more prudent or time-serving by an organized system of private assassination. Their *Sicarii*, or men of the dagger, are recognised in the records of the times as a secret agency, by which the most impatient of the patriots calculated on exterminating the chief supporters of the foreign government. The conspirators met under oath in secret, and chose the victims who should in turn be sacrificed. Their sentence was executed in the streets, or even on the steps of the Temple, on occasions of public festival, and no precautions availed to protect the objects of their enmity.<sup>2</sup> Hitherto the Romans,

The Sicarii or secret assassins.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xx. 7. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xx. 7. 5. The historian, however, ascribes the most

from policy rather than respect, had omitted to occupy Jerusalem with a military force. They were now invited and implored by the chiefs of the priesthood and nobility, and Florus sent a detachment to seize the city and protect the lives of his adherents. This was the point to which the Zealots themselves had wished to lead him. On entering the walls the Romans found the roofs thronged with an excited and mutinous population; they were assailed first with stones, then with more deadly weapons: and when they had succeeded in forcing their way to the strong places of the city, and taken possession of them, they were unable to communicate among themselves, or with the stations behind them. The procurator at Casarea shrank from sending a larger force, to become entangled in similar difficulties. In the popular councils the Zealots were now triumphant. Agrippa in vain harangued the multitude in favour of his patrons. He found it prudent to withdraw in haste to his own territories. The Idumean dynasty ceased to reign even in the hearts of the patriots. They looked back to the glorious era of the Maccabees. The Lower City and the Temple were abandoned to the people, while the Romans held the citadel, with the palace, and other heights and towers of the Upper City on Mount Zion, where the Roman banners waved over the chiefs of the Herodian or Romanizing faction. For seven days the possession of these respective strongholds was more or less warmly contested; but the conflict resulted in the conflagration of the royal residence and other buildings on Zion, the capture of the citadel, the slaughter of the high-priest Ananias, and finally the capitulation of the Romans. But the Zealots were resolved to render accommodation impossible, and involve the nation in inexpiable guilt. The capitulation was ruthlessly violated and every armed invader passed on the edge of the sword.<sup>1</sup>

Insurrection at Jerusalem. Capitulation and massacre of a Roman force.

daring of these assassinations, that of the priest Jonathan, to the instigation of the governor Felix.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* ii. 17. 10.

Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, had been preparing to succour his advanced detachment with the forces of the province. He put himself at the head of the Twelfth legion, with six thousand men picked from other corps, and several thousands of auxiliaries. Agrippa was required to attend the expedition. The Jews rushed forth from Jerusalem and the neighbouring cities, to meet this array. Enthusiasm supplied the place of discipline and training, and, to the surprise of all but those who believed in the divinity of their mission, they broke the ranks of the advancing Romans, and repulsed them with the loss of five hundred men. Gallus was saved from total rout only by his numerous cavalry, in which arm the Jews, unprepared and ill-appointed, were wholly deficient. For three days the proconsul kept within his entrenched camp, which the insurgents had not the means of attacking; then, resuming courage, he advanced again towards Jerusalem. At the instance of Agrippa he even proffered terms of accommodation. But the Jews, headed by the resolute Simon, son of Giora, not only refused to entertain them, but received the bearers with a shower of arrows. Thereupon Gallus led his troops to the gates, and renewed his assaults on various points for five days. Every attack was steadily repelled, and day by day the defenders cast headlong from the walls the most noted partisans of Rome, whom they caught still lurking in the stronghold of national independence. The position of Jerusalem, held by desperate men, defied an irregular assault. Meanwhile the population was rising on the rear and flanks of the assailants. Gallus was compelled to retire once more to the confines of his province, with the loss of five thousand men, many officers, and the eagle of his legion. In dismay he announced to the proconsul that all Judea was in rebellion. Florus hastened to fix on his subordinate the blame of this serious disaster. Though we are not informed what measures were taken against him, it would seem from an expression of Tacitus that his death, which occurred only a few

Disastrous expedition of Cestius Gallus.

A. D. 66.  
A. U. 819.

months later, was ascribed by many to chagrin or apprehension.<sup>1</sup>

The defeat of Gallus had occurred in the first days of October, 66; and the account of it reached Nero in Greece.<sup>2</sup>

Vespasian appointed to conduct operations against the Jews.

A. D. 67.  
A. U. 820.

The importance of the crisis was at once understood. Nero had no abler captain than Vespasian, and this man was chosen accordingly to command the Roman forces in the disturbed region.<sup>3</sup> The commotions so often recurring in Judea had evidently come to a head, and required complete and final suppression. Vespasian was directed to proceed by land into Syria, collecting troops and war-engines on his route, while Titus took ship for Alexandria, and summoned from thence the Fifteenth legion, to serve in the impending campaign. By the spring of the next year a force of three legions, with a full complement of allies and auxiliaries, was mustered at Ptolemais, a convenient spot for the protection of the districts which still adhered to the Romans, and at the same time for conducting operations against Galilee on one side, and Judea on the other.<sup>4</sup>

The six months' interval which had elapsed had not been unemployed by the Jews. The party which favoured the

The chiefs of the Jewish parties.

A. D. 67.  
A. U. 820.

Roman domination had already been crushed in its head-quarters at Jerusalem; its scattered members had taken refuge in the Roman camps. But the nation was still divided into two factions, that of the Zealots, the assertors of national independence, resolved to regain their freedom or perish, and the Herodians, who, still hoping to retain their place among the nations, were willing to accept a compromise, and acknowledge, as the price of existence, the supremacy of a foreign

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* ii. 19.; Suet. *Vespaz.* 4.; Tac. *Hist.* v. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Clinton, *Fast. Rom.* i. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iii. 1. 2.: μόνον εὐρίσκει Οὐεσπασιανὸν ταῖς χρεῖαις ἐναλογούμενα.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iii. 2. 4. The legionary force amounted to 18,000, the auxiliaries to 20,000, the allied contingents to 20,000 more (*Bell. Jud.* iii. 4. 2.).

government. Of the one party the most prominent chiefs were Simon Bargiora, Eleazar, and John of Giscala, all of whom became notorious in the events which followed: while of the other, more respectable for rank and station, the leader was the high-priest Ananus or Annas. The merits of Ananus, if we may believe Josephus, were equal to his position, and, had he lived, his views, it was conceived, might have retained the ascendancy, and preserved Jerusalem together with the nationality, if not the independence of the Jews. At this moment, indeed, whatever jealousies might exist between them, both parties still acted ostensibly in concert; but the second was the more powerful of the two, and, in the measures of defence they adopted in common, it was to the captains of the Herodian faction that the most considerable commands were intrusted.

The Sanhedrim had been converted into a council of war, and had divided Palestine into seven military districts, besides that of the capital itself. Of these, the most important, from wealth and population as well as from its advanced position on the frontier of Syria, embraced the Upper and Lower Galilee, and was occupied by a strong line of posts from the sea to the Lake of Tiberias. But the rich plain of Esdraelon, which lay between this mountain zone and Samaria, was overshadowed by the Roman fortress of Ptolemais; and the tetrarchy of Agrippa, which reached to the border of the lake, menaced Galilee on its eastern flank. Strong as it was by nature, and abounding in strong as well as populous cities, Galilee was critically placed between the outposts of the enemy, and the chief to whom it was entrusted was expected to maintain it from its own resources, with little hope of support from the centre of the Jewish power. Cestius Gallus had aimed a rash blow at Jerusalem itself; but the new leader of the Romans, warned by his defeat, deemed it prudent to adopt other tactics, and it was Vespasian's plan to isolate Galilee from Samaria and Judea, and effect its complete reduction before he turned his arms against the hostile metropolis.

Vespasian's  
first operations  
directed against  
Galilee.

The command in Galilee was given by the Sanhedrim to Josephus, the son of Matthias, the celebrated historian, as he

Josephus, the  
historian,  
placed in com-  
mand of Gal-  
ilee.

afterwards became, of the war, and compiler of the Antiquities of his nation. He belonged to an ancient and noble family, and was noted already for his learning and abilities as well as for his birth. He had visited Rome; and, besides being distinguished with the favour of Poppæa, had been disposed, by what he had witnessed of the splendour of the republic, to acquiesce in her conquering destiny.<sup>1</sup> He was not more than thirty years of age, a time of life, as he remarks, when, if a man has happily escaped sin, he can scarcely guard himself against slander.<sup>2</sup> The circumstance, indeed, of his voyage to Rome, and introduction to the imperial household, gave rise perhaps to jealousies and suspicions, and when on his return he avowed the moderation of his views, and his belief in Roman invincibility, he became no doubt an object of hostility and possibly of misrepresentation to patriots of a more ardent stamp. But the Herodians, as has been said, now prevailed in the Jewish councils, and Josephus was deputed to take command in Galilee, and conduct the defence of that region in the way he deemed most conducive to the general interest.

In the history he has given us of the Jewish War, Josephus dwells, as might be expected, with great minuteness, on

Equivocal  
character of  
Josephus. Va-  
riation in his  
own account of  
his conduct in  
the "History,"  
and in the  
"Life."

his administration of this province, which bore the brunt of the first campaign against the Romans. But besides this general narrative of the war, we possess a second work by the same author, in which he relates the particulars of his own life and personal adventures; and this differs materially in political colour from the first. The *History* had been written soon after the events themselves, in which he bore so eminent a part, when he had fallen into the hands of the Romans, and had consented to purchase

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Vit.* 8.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Vit.* 15.

their favour by a tribute of unlimited admiration. In this work it was his object to excuse to his countrymen his own recent defection; to represent the fidelity with which he had served their true interests, as agent of the party who sought to preserve their nation, though with the sacrifice of its independence; to charge on the rashness of the Zealots the ruin which had actually befallen them, from which he had himself escaped by timely but justifiable submission. But in the *Life*, which was composed twenty years later, in reply to the insinuations of a personal enemy, that he had deserved ill both of Jews and Romans by the aimless obstinacy of his defence, he seeks no longer to keep up appearances with his countrymen, but devotes all his ingenuity to showing that he was throughout a covert friend of Rome, seeking, under the guise of prudent patriotism, to smooth the progress of the invaders, and deliver Palestine into their hands. If a cloud of suspicion hangs to this day over the head of the historian, he owes it to this shameless representation of his own conduct. The ardent upholders of a Jewish nationality, which has survived in some sense the fall of Jerusalem nearly eighteen centuries, still denounce him, from his own words, as a renegade to their cause.<sup>1</sup> His equivocation is patent, and admits of no defence; yet I believe that of the two representations he gives us of his policy, the former is the nearer to the truth;—that he was more faithful to his professions, in fact, than he wished, at a later period, to be supposed; that he has falsely accused himself, to preserve the favour of his Masters, of crimes which should only have gained him their contempt. He seeks in vain to repudiate the glory which must ever attach, in his own despite, to his skill and prowess. Allowing for many exaggerations and misstatements in both, according to their respective bias, I still regard the *Wars*, rather than the *Life*, as the genuine record of the campaign in Galilee.

If the resources of the Jewish people were unequal to the task of resisting the concentrated energies of Rome, they

<sup>1</sup> See Salvador's History, il. 15. 49.



Military resources of Judea.

were far more formidable than could have been expected from the smallness of their country, and their slender experience in war. In extent Palestine scarcely equalled one of the least of modern European states, such as Belgium or Piedmont; nor was its soil naturally calculated to support a very dense population. It seems however that, partly from artificial cultivation, partly from foreign importations, it actually maintained more than proportionate numbers: Galilee alone, a district not larger than an English county, could boast of *numerous* cities, the least of which contained fifteen thousand inhabitants; and Josephus found himself there at the head of a hundred thousand armed men.<sup>1</sup> Exempted as the Jews had generally been from the levies imposed on the provinces, the flower of their youth had not been drained to recruit the cohorts on distant frontiers. But their kings had been required to maintain contingents within their own territories; and though the sceptre had departed from Judah, the country was still full of soldiers trained to service under the Herods and Agrippas. It had, moreover, been long infested by armed bands, who had coloured their brigandage with the name of patriotism, and might be not less formidable when arrayed under a truly national standard. The whole people recurred with instinctive alacrity to the traditions, still faithfully preserved, of its ancient military organization under Maccabæus, David, and Joshua. Arms were distributed to all who could bear them, and more, says Tacitus, claimed the honour of arming than in proportion to their numbers: the women were not less devoted than the men, and all agreed in the determination rather to die than be expelled, the only contemplated alternative, from their country.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iii. 3. It must be observed, however, that this statement regarding the surprising populousness of Galilee should be accepted with caution. The numbers of Josephus are liable throughout to suspicion of great exaggeration. In some cases this is susceptible of proof, as will appear; in others, if I sometimes adopt his figures without remark, it may be understood that I do not on that account put any real confidence in them.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 13.

Though the moderate party, of which Josephus was the instrument, was for the moment in the ascendant in the council at Jerusalem, he could not rely on its maintaining its power from day to day, nor could it secure its chiefs from being harassed by the Zealots with demands for more violent and un-

Josephus is harassed in his government by the intrigues of the Zealots.

compromising measures. If the governor of Galilee was satisfied with arming his militia, storing and fortifying his towns, and presenting to the Romans a dignified attitude of resistance, there were more vehement spirits at work around him, urging him to spoil and kill every doubtful partisan, and challenge the foe to a war of sanguinary reprisals. The Zealots of Galilee, who swarmed in every township, were stimulated by a countryman, John of Giscala, a man of great influence in Jerusalem, whom Josephus brands without reserve as a ruffian and a brigand. The historian has described to us how this opponent misrepresented all his actions, how he plotted against his life, corrupted the obedience of his people, and finally incited the council at Jerusalem to supersede him in his government.<sup>1</sup> In defeating these machinations Josephus seems to have employed great address, and we may the more readily believe his account from the vigour he unquestionably displayed in preparing for the defence of his province. It may be true that from the first he despaired of successful resistance to the Romans; his admiration of their policy, his awe at their military resources, were unworthy perhaps of the leader of a national insurrection, and helped to insure its defeat; nevertheless we must allow for the subjugation of men's minds, those especially of the most intelligent and thoughtful, by the long career of Roman invincibility. We must remember that the seeds of decay we can already trace in Roman discipline and conduct were not apparent to the generation with which we are now concerned: to them submission to Rome was prudence and philosophy, perhaps with some it was religion. The Zealots were so far

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iii. 21., *Vit.* 38. 40.

in the right that the last faint hope of successful resistance lay in the rash valour of obstinacy and blindness.

It was behind the walls of Jotapata that Josephus prepared to make his great stand for the defence of his province, which he declined to imperil by operations in the field. The exact position of this place is not known; but it is said to have been strong by nature as well as by art, and we may conjecture that it stood on one of the spurs of the hill-region of Galilee. While

Josephus defends Jotapata, and is captured by the Romans.

Vespasian was collecting his forces at Ptolemais, he had detached his lieutenant Placidus to make a demonstration against this fortress, but without result; and the general himself moved against it at a later period, with the main strength of his forces. The fidelity and courage of Josephus, who threw himself into the place, are sufficiently attested by his defence of forty-seven days, by the repulse of Placidus, the endurance of great extremities by famine, and the variety of resources with which he baffled the skill and perseverance of the enemy. Vespasian was forced to lead the assault in person, and suffered himself a wound. Josephus indeed admits, possibly to get favour with his conquerors, that for his own part he would have desisted earlier from a contest he knew to be hopeless; but when the obstinacy of his countrymen would listen to no compromise, he gallantly cast in his lot with theirs, and fought at their head till the place was finally stormed and captured. The account he gives of what followed savours strongly of deliberate imposture. He escaped, it seems, with thirty-nine of his comrades into one of the caves with which the region abounded; but his retreat was discovered to the Roman commander, who sent a friend to offer him his life. The fugitives, however, were exasperated and desperate; they would not suffer their chief to capitulate. Their cave was inaccessible to an armed force; but the Romans could have lit a fire at the entrance, and stifled them with the smoke. Vespasian, it is said, was anxious to get possession of Josephus alive, and forbade this to be done. The fanatics, however, resolved to kill themselves by

mutual slaughter, and Josephus could only persuade them to abstain from indiscriminate massacre, and draw lots in successive pairs, to fall each on the sword of the other. This plan, which it seems had been recommended to him in a dream, was adopted with enthusiasm, and, strange to relate, Josephus himself and another were left last, when all the rest had perished. He persuaded this irresolute survivor to save both their lives by surrender, and the astute defender of Jotapata shelters his character for patriotism behind the manifest interposition of Providence.<sup>1</sup>

Nor, it seems, did the favour of Heaven stop here. Josephus was brought a prisoner to Vespasian, and it was announced to him that he should be sent as a pledge of victory to Nero. This he knew too well would be the certain prelude to his execution; but at this crisis he was inspired to predict to the Roman general the imperial fortunes which awaited him. Vespasian, whose ear was ever open to pretenders to supernatural knowledge, listened and believed. Josephus secured his favour, and was carried about for some years by his conqueror in a custody which he had no inclination perhaps to evade. Admitted finally among the clients of the emperor's house, he adopted the name of Titus Flavius, and attached himself to his patron's retinue at Rome.<sup>2</sup>

Josephus secures the favour of Vespasian.

By the capture of Jotapata and the governor of the province the resistance of Galilee was completely broken. Vespasian returned with his victorious army to Ptolemais before the end of June, and thence removed to Cæsarea on the Mediterranean, where the Greek population urged him, but without success, to

Reduction of Galilee and capture of Jotapata.

Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iii. 7. It seems to have been an object with Josephus to recommend himself to the credulous Vespasian as a man favoured with visions and prophetic inspiration. The story in the text was, I have no doubt, fabricated with this view.

<sup>1</sup> At the close of this war Josephus received grants of land in Judea from the conqueror, together with an annual pension and the Roman franchise. Joseph. *Vit.* 76. "A chacun selon ses œuvres," says Salvador, bitterly con-

sacrifice his distinguished prisoner. With two legions now stationed at this place, and two advanced to Scythopolis in the interior, he cut off the communications of Galilee with Judea, and was enabled to carry on at leisure the pacification of the northern districts. The only maritime place retained by the Jews was Joppa, where they had mustered a naval force for the annoyance of the Romans, whose supplies came, we must suppose, in a great measure from Egypt. The Romans sent a detachment to occupy the town, which made no resistance, the people taking to their ships. A storm dashed their armaments in pieces, and all that escaped the sea were massacred on shore. The town was destroyed, and a garrison established amidst its ruins, to prevent the recovery of its convenient roadstead.<sup>1</sup>

The tactics of Vespasian were slow and cautious. He was prepared to devote more than one campaign to making sure his ground before advancing to the assault of Jerusalem. In the course of this summer he conferred with Agrippa at Cæsarea-Philippi, to arrange perhaps the best mode of co-operation with the most powerful dependent of the empire, and the tetrarch, who well knew where his own interests lay, displayed his zeal in the Roman cause by a series of sumptuous entertainments. His sister Berenice, since the death of a first husband and her own desertion of a second, had continued to reside with him, and rumours prevailed about the character of their connexion more revolting to western ears than to eastern.<sup>2</sup> If we may believe the statement of Josephus, Berenice must have been thirty-nine years of age at this time, when she became perhaps first known to Titus, twelve years her junior: we

Capture of Tiberias and Tarichea.

trusting this gilded servitude with the fate of the real patriots of Jerusalem. Salvador, ii. 467.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Juvenal, vi. 158.: "Barbarus incestus dedit hunc Agrippa sorori." After the death of Herod, king of Chalcis, A.D. 48, Berenice was united to Polemo, king of Cilicia. She was living with Agrippa A. D. 60, when St. Paul appeared before them at Cæsarea.

shall find that ten years later he was even then passionately enamoured of her. But the Roman general was still conducting his operations with unremitting activity. In August Tiberias surrendered, and Tarichea was stormed in September. The capture of this last place was followed by an appalling atrocity, for which we can discover no excuse, nor was any advanced for it. Josephus relates with little emotion that the whole population was collected in the Stadium, the infirm and old, twelve hundred in number, were at once put to death, six thousand of the younger were sent to work at the cutting of the Isthmus, the rest, to the number of thirty thousand, were sold publicly as slaves.<sup>1</sup> Doubtless the barbarity of the Romans, if it was really such as is here represented, was not unprovoked by similar excesses on the part of their opponents; and henceforth we shall find both sides rivalling each other in remorseless bloodshed, whenever opportunity offered.<sup>2</sup> In no work are the hideous features of ancient warfare so nakedly portrayed as in the pages of the Jewish historian. With the end of the year all northern Palestine had fallen into the hands of the conquerors, and John of Giscala, who had proved incapable of replacing the governor he had denounced as a traitor, had sought refuge in Jerusalem; *so God willed it*, says his opponent, *for the destruction of the city.*<sup>3</sup>

The campaign of 68 was conducted by Vespasian on the same principles as the preceding. He still refrained from any attempt on Jerusalem, and when urged to strike at the head of the Jewish confederation, already weakened by intestine divisions, he replied that it was best to leave nothing to chance, and to let the success of his operations be worked

Second campaign of Vespasian. Reduction of Perea.

A. D. 68.  
A. U. 821.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iii. 9, 10. I have already given a caution with regard to the habitual exaggeration of Josephus. He was disposed to magnify the sufferings of the Jews, in excuse for his own temporizing counsels. It should be remembered that his history, composed in Greek, was not written for the Romans.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, in his bitter enmity towards the chiefs of the Zealots, had a strong motive to make the worst of their misdeeds.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iv. 1. 10., iv. 2, 3.

out by the hands of his opponents. Two officers, Placidus and Trajanus, the father of the future emperor of that name, ravaged the district beyond Jordan, and drove multitudes of its houseless people towards the treacherous defences of the capital. Urging before them all their flocks and herds, as in the great national migration of seventeen centuries before, the fugitives were arrested by the swollen waters of the river, and massacred with frightful slaughter.<sup>1</sup> But many thousands still escaped to swell the throng, which was destined to be cooped within the capital when at length the Roman armies approached it. Vespasian was at the same time drawing on from the opposite quarter; and his progress, as before, was marked with flames and devastation, and almost incredible bloodshed. His outposts were advanced to Jericho; but in the middle of the year he withdrew from active operations, fixing himself at Cæsarea, and listening for the first report of the impending revolutions in the West, while Titus was sent to confer with Mucianus at Antioch, and discuss matters of deeper interest to both father and son, than the means to be employed for reducing a provincial capital.

During all the following year warfare was suspended on the part of the Romans. Confiding perhaps in the omens and prophecies which assured him of the eventual succession, Vespasian seems to have watched the rise both of Galba and Otho, without faltering in his own anticipations, and to have reserved the strength of his legions for the crisis evidently approaching. By Mucianus in Syria, by Tiberius Alexander in Egypt, by Agrippa and Berenice in the centre of Palestine, his interests were diligently served, and in the year 69, as we have seen, he was saluted emperor by his troops, and irrevocably launched on the career of ambition. It was arranged that Mucianus should conduct the war against Vitellius in Europe, that Vespasian should seize in person the

Suspension of  
hostilities  
during the  
struggle for the  
succession.

A. D. 69.  
A. U. 822.

granaries of Egypt, that Agrippa should betake himself to Rome, and intrigue for him with the nobles in the capital; while to Titus was committed the charge of the contest in Palestine, which his father, still faithful to the traditions of the service, would not consent to abandon even with the empire in view.

The admiration our Jewish historian has expressed for the power and greatness of Rome stands remarkably in contrast with the scornful disparagement of the Jews in which his Roman rival indulges.<sup>1</sup> Of the narrative of the war, as it was written by Tacitus, we possess a fragment only. The *Histories*, the first of his longer works, commence with the consulship of Galba in 69, and the author, preserving strictly the annalistic form he had prescribed himself, reviews in a few lines only the circumstances of the war in question, as conducted up to that date by Gallus and Vespasian.<sup>2</sup> The year 69, he says, was devoted to the civil contest, and no hostile movement was attempted by Titus until peace was restored at home, and the empire had finally passed into the hands of his father. It is from this point that his own narrative commences, and this is again broken off, after a few introductory chapters, by the accident which has deprived us of the remainder of the work.<sup>3</sup> We may conjecture, indeed, that in the later composition to which he gave the name of *Annals*, in which he traced the earlier history from Tiberius to Nero, the story of the first campaigns was supplied, and occupied

Sources of  
Jewish history  
misappreciated  
by Tacitus.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* iii. 5.) gives an interesting account of the Roman armies, adding: ταῦτα μὲν οὖν διεξῆλθον οὐ Ῥωμαίους ἐπαινέσαι προαιρούμενος τοσούτον, ὅσον εἰς τε παραμυθίαν τῶν κειραυμένων, καὶ εἰς ἀποτροπὴν τῶν κατεργαζόντων.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 10.: "Duravit tamen patientia Judæis usque ad Gessium Florum procuratorem. Sub eo bellum ortum, et comprimere ceptantem Cestium Gallum, Syriæ legatum, varia proelia, ac sæpius adversa, exaspero. Qui ubi fato aut tædio occidit, missu Neronis Vespasianus fortuna famæque et egregiis ministris (e. g. the father of Trajan), intra duas sætates cuncta camporum, omnesque præter Hierosolyma urbes victore exercitu tenebat."

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 1-13.



under its proper years the important place it merited. But this portion of the Annals also is lost, and the Roman account of the most terrible conflict of the empire appears as a mutilated trunk, boldly designed and colossal in proportions, but shorn of the head and limbs, the beginning and the conclusion. Thus disappointed we look with the more interest to a sketch preserved us of the antiquities of the Jewish nation, from which we derive at least an insight into the spirit in which Tacitus approached his subject, and the estimate he may be supposed to have formed of that people's character. With the works of Philo and Josephus, not to mention the sacred records of the Jews, within his reach, it must strike us with surprise that so grave a writer should be content to refer, for the instruction of his countrymen, to the loose conjectures of Greek mythologers and fabulists. While there were thousands of native Jews and proselytes at Rome, instructed in the narrative of Moses, he preferred, it seems, to draw his information from the hostile Egyptians frequenting the camps of Titus and Vespasian, and swallowed without reflection the figments of Manetho and the pretended sages of Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> The story of the Jewish people, thus communicated to Tacitus, is exposed to the scorn of their conquerors in such language as the following:

*Before relating the final destruction of this famous city, it will be well to explain its origin. The Judæi, it is reported, flying from the island of Crete, alighted on the farthest corner of Libya, at the period when Saturn was driven from his realm by Jupiter. This fact is established from their name: Ida is a famous mountain in Crete, and its people, the Idæi, became denominated with a barbaric extension of the*

Tacitus's strange misrepresentation of the origin of the Jews and the character of their religion.

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Joseph. c. *Apion.* i. 25.: τῶν δὲ εἰς ἡμᾶς βλασφημιῶν ἤρξαντο καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι· βουλόμενοι δὲ ἐκείνους τινὲς χαρίζεσθαι, παροτρύνοντες ἐπεχείρουν τὴν ἀληθείαν, οὔτε τὴν εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἄφικιν, ὥς ἐγένετο, τῶν ἡμετέρων προγόνων ὁμολογοῦντες, οὔτε τὴν ἐξοδὸν ἀληθεύοντες, κ. τ. λ. He particularly instances Manetho and Chæremón as circulating falsehoods about the origin of the Jews, and these appear to have been the sources to which Tacitus chiefly referred.

sound, Judæi. Some relate that in the reign of Isis a multitude of people, overflowing the limits of Egypt, cast themselves on the neighbouring countries under chiefs named Hierosolymus and Judas. Others again assert that the Jews were a swarm of Ethiopians, driven by internal animosities to flee their country in the days of Cepheus. Again it is related that certain wanderers from Assyria, in quest of lands, occupied a part of Egypt, and quickly possessed themselves of Hebrew towns and territories, and the regions bordering upon Syria. Finally, another tradition assigns them a nobler origin, declaring that their city Hierosolyma was built and named by the Solymi, the (Lycian) people celebrated by Homer.<sup>1</sup>

The idea present to the writer's mind in regard to all these derivations, except the last, was that the Jews were properly no nation at all, but only the scum and offscouring of a nation, and as such were entitled to none of the observance due, by the comity of nations, to the acknowledged lords of earth. It was only by establishing their descent from an Homeric people, as Tacitus, perhaps reluctantly, suggests, that they could pretend to claim in their favour the protection of international law, as understood by antiquity.

*Most writers agree, he continues, that a loathsome skin disorder once prevailing in Egypt, king Bocchoris was commanded by the oracle of Hammon to purge his realm of this brood of people, and dismiss them to other lands, as hateful to the gods. Thus brought together and abandoned in the desert, when the rest were overwhelmed with their distress, Moses, one of the exiles, exhorted them to expect no help from gods or men, but to trust in him as a divine leader. . . . They consented, and commenced their journey at random, with no idea whither they were going, or with what object. Nothing so distressed them as the want of water. And now they were reduced to the last extremity, and flung themselves in despair*

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 3.

upon the ground, when a herd of wild asses was seen making its way from feeding to a hill covered with wood. Moses followed, expecting them to lead to some grassy spot, and discovered abundant springs under their guidance. Thus refreshed, the fugitives completed a journey of six days, and on the seventh took possession of lands, driving out their owners, where they founded their city, and consecrated their temple. To make himself a nation for the time to come, Moses appointed them new rites, opposed to those of all mankind besides. Among them every thing elsewhere sacred is held profane; to them all things are lawful which among us are forbidden. They have consecrated in their temple a figure of the brute by the guidance of which they slaked their thirst and found their way in the desert; and they sacrifice rams there, on purpose, it should seem, to cast insult upon Hammon.<sup>1</sup> They slay the ox also, which the Egyptians

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 4.: "Effigiem animalis, quo monstrante errorem sitimque depulerant, penetrali sacravere." The writer cannot mean to imply that the image of an ass was worshipped in the Jewish temple, for he says, immediately afterwards, that the fane was vacant. He had heard, perhaps, that such a figure was kept there as a votive offering. However the notion arose, the worship of an ass, or more properly of an ass's head, was long objected to the Jews by their opponents (see Joseph. c. *Apion.* ii. 6, 7.), and afterwards to the Christians. Tertull. *Apol.* 16.: Minuc. Felix, *Octav.* 28.

Recent excavations on the Aventine have discovered the representation, scratched on the wall, of a human figure with an ass's head, crucified, a man in the act of worshipping it, with the inscription: 'Ἀλεξάνδρος, στήθεσι θεόν. See the *Dublin Review* for March, 1887. This, it is conjectured, is a caricature of Christian worship, in accordance with the well-known statement in Tertullian. The head, however, is allowed to be more like that of a horse than of an ass. I may remind the reader of the passage in Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* viii. 64.), in which he says that Cæsar had a horse with human forefeet, as represented in the statue before the temple of Venus. The story is copied by Suetonius (*Jul.* 61.) and Dion (*Irili.* 54.). The existence of such a statue, which every citizen must have seen daily, cannot be questioned, however absurd the popular notion about it which these writers so gravely embraced. But some lines in Statius (*Sylv.* i. 1. 84.) seem to throw light on the subject. Comparing the equestrian statue of Domitian with that of Cæsar, he says:

"Cedat equus Latine qui contra templa Diones  
Cæsarei stat sede fori, quem traderis ausus

worship as their god *Apis*. They abstain from swine's flesh, in memory of the plague of scabs from which they had suffered, to which that animal is subject. By numerous fasts they attest the long famine they endured, and their unleavened bread bears witness to the hurry in which they snatched their corn for their journey. The seventh day, they say, was appointed for rest, because they then ceased from their miseries, and from thence they have gone on to indulge themselves with a cessation from labour every seventh year also. Others affirm that this is done in honour of *Saturn*: whether because they got the rudiments of their cult from the *Idæans*, or because, of the seven planets that sway the destinies of man, that of *Saturn* is loftiest and most potent. . . .

From the base origin of these gipsy wanderers it would follow, in the mind of Tacitus, that their destinies were vulgar and terrene. No God was their patron, no wonders were wrought for them; their rites were of no divine intuition, their usages were uninspired by a breath of superior intelligence. Their ceremonies, divested of the charm of immemorial mystery, were plain prosaic references to the most obvious phenomena of nature. In this, as in all other re-

Pellæo, Lysippe, duci; mox Cæsaris ora  
Aurata cervice tulit."

I venture to suggest that this work of Lysippus was the man-horse in question, and was symbolical of Alexander's power or divinity. Cæsar carried it off from Syria, and replaced the head of the rider with his own. Mionnet, *Médaillæ Antiquæ*, Supplement, tom. v. art. 861., thus describes a coin of Nicæa:

"M. ANT. ΓΟΡΔΙΑΝΟC. ΑΥ. Tête radiée, avec un bouclier et un javelot sur l'épaule droite.

"Revers: ΙΙΙΙΟΝ. ΒΡΟΤΟΠΙΟΑΑ. ΝΙΚΑΙΕΩΝ. Héros à cheval, la tête couverte du bonnet Phrygien, et tenant de la main droite une couronne. Le cheval, dont les pieds de devant sont humains, tient dans le droit levé un bâton ou sceptre, autour duquel est un serpent, et sa queue repliée se termine par une tête de serpent [comp. *Apoc.* ix. 19.: *αὶ γὰρ οὐραὶ αὐτῶν ὁμοίαι θφασιν ἔχουσαι κεφαλὰς*]; une petite Victoire vole au devant du héros pour le couronner."

In Creuzer's *Religions de l'Antiquité* (Guigniaut) I find (i. i. p. 190) that Vishnu is expected to appear in his tenth avatar on horseback, or, as some say, with a horse's face and a human figure, for the final punishment of sin.

spects, the Jews, he would have maintained, were entitled to no indulgence from their conquerors, no sympathy from the intelligent and humane.

*These fashions, he proceeds to say, however they were introduced, are sanctioned by their antiquity: their other peculiarities are less innocent, and have prevailed through the evil disposition of the people themselves. The Jews have grown into a nation by the agglomeration of the worst of men from all quarters; and dogged as is their fidelity, prompt as is their sympathy towards one another, while towards all besides they exercise the hatred of avowed enemies,—refusing to eat or intermarry with them, however licentious in their connexions among themselves,—they have appointed circumcision for their distinctive bond of union. This token they exact of all who adopt their religion, and these they teach, as their first lesson, to despise their own divinities, and renounce their country, their kindred, and their friends. They are careful, however, to multiply their numbers, and count it a crime to put their kin to death: they believe, moreover, that the souls of those who die in battle or on the scaffold are immortal. Hence their lust of begetting and their scorn of dying. Like the Egyptians, they bury, and do not burn their bodies, and take the same interest as the Egyptians in preserving them: for both hold a like belief about the dead, though their ideas of divine things are directly opposed. For the Egyptians adore various animals, and their visible images; the Jews conceive of God mentally, and as one only. Profane, they say, are those who fashion a figure of the Deity with perishable materials, after a human likeness: the Deity is supreme and eternal, nor can It change, nor is It liable to perish. Accordingly they suffer no images in their cities, nor even in their temples. They concede no such flattery to kings, no such compliments to Cæsars. But because their priests played on pipes and timbrels, and wore ivy garlands, and a golden vine was found in their temple, some have thought that Father Bacchus, the conqueror of the East, was worshipped by them, though their usage bore little*

*resemblance to his: inasmuch as Bacchus instituted brilliant and joyous rites, but the ceremonial of the Jews is pitiful and sordid.*<sup>1</sup>

These studied insults towards a vanquished enemy, this ungenerous perversion of facts to blast his character, and repel his claims to justice and compassion, must not be passed over without notice. The author's determination to paint the rites of Judaism in the worst colours, so different from the light in which his countrymen had been wont to regard them, is not more odious than his insensibility to the sublimity of its dogmas, and the purity of its moral teaching.<sup>2</sup> Whether he echoed the ravings of popular hostility, or enrolled himself among the flatterers of the Roman court, we must equally deny him a love of truth and concern for justice. We shall the less regret the chance which has deprived us of his narrative of the Jewish war, in which the absence of candour and just appreciation of the enemy was no doubt ill redeemed by painting, however brilliant, Tacitus, it may be feared, was incapable of understanding the burning zeal and solemn enthusiasm which marked the most soul-stirring struggle of all ancient history.

There is the less cause to regret the loss of Tacitus's account of the war.

Whatever was the moral corruption of the Jewish people at this epoch, however deep the degeneracy of feeling which blinded them to the spiritual character of the promises already fulfilled among them, their faith in the national creed was not perhaps then less intense than in the days of their purity and simplicity. Sufferings had cherished and not extinguished it; for these sufferings had always been accompanied with hope, and the whole genius of Judaism was fitted to keep alive the expectation of deliverance. The repetition, day by day, of

Vigour of the religious sentiment among the Jews at this epoch.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 5.: "Judeorum mos absurdus sordidusque."

<sup>2</sup> It may be remembered that Strabo's account of the origin and teaching of the Jews (xvi. 2. p. 761, 762.) is far more dignified and candid than that of Tacitus. This later change of sentiment towards them, which may be remarked also in the tone of popular literature at Rome, is well worthy of notice.

the Psalms and Prophecies charmed away the advances of despair and despondency. Nor can we doubt that the concentration of their faith on One God gave peculiar vigour to the religious sentiment among them. Monotheism is more enthusiastic than Polytheism: it assures men of a closer connexion with the Deity: it may rush into the excesses of fatalism or fanaticism, but it stands a strain of temporal discouragement which would break asunder all the bands of idolatry and superstition. No polytheist could comprehend the principles which animated the Jew at this eventful epoch; least of all a polytheist of the Roman aristocracy; one who had renounced all vital faith himself, and trusted in no higher intelligence than his own. The strength of this people's convictions is shown by their steadfast rejection of the pretensions of magic, which their religion strenuously denounced. Tacitus himself remarks the absence among them, most strange as it must have seemed to him, of those expiatory rites by which the heathen avowed his terrors in the face of prodigies and omens. In this sturdy abnegation of the resources of feebler minds he might have discovered the genuine fervour of the faith which animated the people he so ungenerously calumniated.<sup>1</sup>

There is another point of view, however, which the heathen philosopher could not seize, from which the Christian must regard the position of the Jews. Whether we consider their sin to have lain in their carnal interpretation of prophecy, or in their rejection of truth and godliness in the person of Jesus Christ, they were judicially abandoned to their own passions, and the punishment which naturally awaited

The Jews in the view of Christians, judicially abandoned to their selfish passions.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 13.: "Evenerant prodigia, quæ neque hostiis neque votis piare fas habet gens superstitioni obnoxia, religionibus adversa." Exception must be made for private adventurers, such as the exorcists in *Act.* xix. 13. (comp. Justin Martyr, c. *Tryph.* p. 311.; ἐποποιῶνται τῇ τέχνῃ), who seem to have been generally Jews resident abroad. A strange passage in Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xxx. 2.) speaks of the magic of the Jews at Cyprus, connecting it, by a mere conjecture apparently, with Moses: "Est et alia magices factio, a Mose

them. Though contending for a noble principle, as apostles of national liberty, the Zealots were not cordially supported by the mass of their own people: a large majority of the Jews would doubtless have acquiesced, however reluctantly, in the Roman dominion; still more would have been content to temporize; but the minority were the fiercest and the strongest in will; they could not persuade but they would not yield, and they enforced their determination upon the multitude by threats and violence. The Zealots have not inaptly been compared with the Montagnards of the French revolution, driven by their own indomitable passions to assert the truths which possessed them, with a ferocity which no possession can justify.

The reduction of Galilee and Peræa had driven numbers of the rural population within the walls of Jerusalem, the only stronghold which now seemed capable of protecting them. Among the rest, John of Giscala, as we have seen, had abandoned the defence of his native city, escaping from it before it had yet fallen, and had thrown himself with the most violent of his partisans into the capital. To the charge of cowardice with which the opposite faction, ill-pleased at his reappearance, assailed him, he replied that it was necessary to concentrate the forces of the nation, and compel the enemy to come to the attack of the impregnable fortress they had so long shrunk from. But this influx of strangers, scared from their judgment, and with nothing more to lose, was fatal to the supremacy of the Moderate party in the city, who already maintained their position with difficulty. The views of the Zealots were not directed against the Romans only: they aimed at a complete revolution in the government at home, and as long as the invader was still distant, postponed every other care to an intrigue for exterminating their rivals, and grasping the helm of state. Under the guidance of the daring demagogue, Eleazar, they introduced bands of ruffians into

Revolutionary  
proceedings of  
the Zealots in  
Jerusalem.

*etiamnum et Lotapea Judæis pendens, sed multis millibus annorum post Zoroastrem. Tanto recentior est Cypria."*



the city, who filled the streets with tumult and disorder, and seized the person of Antipas, a kinsman of Agrippa, and with him a number of the chief nobility. Apprehending that they should not be able to retain these victims in custody, the chiefs of the faction resolved to destroy them without form of trial, and pretending that they were in communication with the Romans, introduced a band of cutthroats into the prison, and put most of them to the sword.<sup>1</sup> The populace, still generally attached to their natural leaders, were cowed by the audacity of the act, and looked on with passive amazement. The Zealots proceeded to declare the vacancy of some priesthoods appropriated to noble families, and conferred them on obscure creatures of their own.

Thus insulted and menaced, Ananus, and such of his associates as had escaped assassination, appealed at last to the people, and organized the friends of order, including, no doubt, some secret adherents of Rome, against the terrorists, as a common enemy. The Zealots, menaced in their turn, but more prompt and audacious, seized the strong enclosure of the Temple, and established themselves within it. From thence they made various sallies against their opponents; their fanatical ardour overmatched the better discipline of the state militia; but they were far inferior in numbers, and were still confined, for the most part, to their defences, while Ananus, though he pushed his troops within their outer lines, shrank from turning his arms against the holy place in which they sheltered themselves. The Zealots were utterly unscrupulous. They had employed assassination; they now contemplated massacre. They treated with the turbulent banditti, who, expelled from their homes in the southern districts of Judea, were now roaming the country, and these, twenty thousand in number, rushed to the gates of the city, which they found closed against them. On the occurrence, however, of a tremendous tempest, which threw the government off its guard, the rev-

They massacre the Moderate party, and assume the government.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iv. 8. 6.

olutionists contrived to introduce them within the walls, and joining with them, attacked their opponents unawares with murderous effect. Ananus was among the first victims, and with him fell most of the leaders of his party. Eleazar and his confederates issued in triumph from their fastness, seized the reins of government, and completed the carnage of the day with a series of judicial executions.<sup>1</sup> The extreme party now reigned unresisted in Jerusalem. Jehovah, they proclaimed, had manifestly declared Himself on their side. Judea stood once more erect and independent, and invited her children dispersed throughout the world to fulfil, by a common effort, her imperial destiny. But in Rome they had been crushed; in Alexandria they were baffled; Nero had cajoled Vologesus, and engaged him to control their movements in Ctesiphon and Seleucia; the summons of the patriots met, it seems, with no response beyond the confines of Palestine, and the army of Titus confronted in closed lists the defenders of the city of David.

There was still a short interval ere the eagles were advanced in sight, and the *abomination of desolation* stood in the Holy Place.<sup>2</sup> While the chiefs of the Roman army were occupied with manœuvres for securing the empire, the leaders of the Jews were actively engaged in plotting against each other. The Zealots, in the moment of victory, were split into three factions. Eleazar, at the head of the residents of Jerusalem, still held his strong position in the inner enclosure of the Temple; but John of Giscala, who had refused to join in the recent massacres, and had received the adhesion of a portion of the population, now shocked and remorseful at the deeds they had committed, succeeded to the lodgment of Ananus in its outer precincts. Simon Bargiora, who had held the fortress

The Zealots, in three factions, occupy the city.

Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* iv. 4.

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xxiv. 15.: *βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως*. See Grotius in loc.: "Non dubito *βδέλυγμα* vocari signa Romanorum militaria." The *τόπος ἅγιος*, or "holy place," according to the same interpreter, includes the tract of country between the city and the hills which stand round about it.

of Massada on the Asphaltic lake during the late campaigns, now entered the city with a third army, and posted himself on the opposite hill of Zion, from whence he conducted the defence of the common ramparts. John and Simon might dispute the superiority in numbers and equipment; but the stronghold of Eleazar was regarded by the Romans as the real citadel of Jerusalem. After many open attacks and secret stratagems, John contrived to assassinate this powerful rival, and obtained possession of the whole Temple with the eminence on which it stood. Henceforth the contest was narrowed to two competitors, who consented to waive hostilities only on the approach of the foreign armies to their walls.<sup>1</sup>

From the edge of the high country which intervenes between the Mediterranean and the Jordan valley, swells out a broad projection, inclining generally to the southward, and terminated abruptly by deep converging ravines.<sup>2</sup> Before plunging into these hollows, it rises in more than one distinct knoll, and, contrary to the usual configuration of such spurs of hills, the highest of these is nearest to its extremity. This conspicuous eminence the Jews, at least after their return from the Captivity, distinguished with the sacred name of Zion.<sup>3</sup> Here they pointed

Topography of  
Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 12.: "Tres duces, totidem exercitus. Extrema et latissima mœnia Simo . . . mediam urbem Joannes, templum Eleazarus firmaverat. Multitudine et armis Joannes ac Simo, Eleazarus loco pollebat." Josephus explains their positions more definitely. *Bell. Jud.* v. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The highest elevation of this tongue of land is said to be 2200 feet above the sea. Mr. Stanley has expressed clearly what preceding describers had failed to signalize, that the plateau of Jerusalem is generally above the level of the surrounding country. *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Such is the name given to this hill in modern times, in conformity with the description in the Book of Maccabees, and apparently with the common usage of the Jews after the Captivity. It is remarkable that the name is never mentioned by Josephus or the writers of the New Testament, who were aware, perhaps, that its application was erroneous, and that the original Zion, on which stood the city of David, was the opposite height of the Temple. This transposition of the name (see Fergusson's *Essay*, and Thrupp's *Ancient Jerusalem*) seems to furnish an important key to the topography of that city. I have no

out the reputed tomb of their favourite sovereign David; here was the royal palace of Herod described with such enthusiasm by the Jewish historian, around which clustered perhaps the mansions of the nobles; the buildings on this summit were designated as the Upper City, encircled with a wall which crowned the brow of the hill. Eastward of Zion, and separated from it by a hollow, now scarcely distinguishable, called the *Tyropœon*, or cheesemarket, rose another eminence, sloping gradually from the north till it dipped into the valley of Jehoshaphat, with an escarpment of two hundred feet.<sup>1</sup> The Temple of Jerusalem, planted nearly on the southern extremity of this second hill, was completely overlooked by Zion, and also by the fortress Antonia, with which Herod protected it on its northern flank. Beyond this fortress the ground still rose to the northward, though lowered to some extent artificially, and received the name of *Acra* to indicate its marked elevation, though the buildings upon it were denominated the Lower City, in contradistinction from the Upper City of Zion.<sup>2</sup> *Acra*, or *Moriah*, as it has been called by a vulgar error, might thus represent the Capitoline, and Zion the Palatine at Rome: the depression between them, crossed by a bridge or causeway, was thronged with the dwellings of the lowest classes, and occupied the place of the *Velabrum* or the *Suburra*. A second

special qualifications myself for determining the merit of this view, on which a more competent witness, Mr. Stanley, gives no decided opinion. (*Sinai and Palestine*, p. 172.) The reader will, however, expect some aid in following my description, and I have furnished him with the best plan I can exhibit of ancient Jerusalem, being a slight modification of Kiepert's.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus declares, in his usual spirit of exaggeration, that the depth of the valley beneath the eastern front of the Temple was 400 cubits or 600 feet. *Antiq. Jud.* xx. 8. 7.

<sup>2</sup> The hill of *Acra* is described by Josephus as ἀμφικύπτου, "gibbous," or "pointed at the extremities with convex sides,"—a word which is applied elsewhere to the moon in her third quarter; it represents very fairly the configuration of the hill, popularly called *Moriah*, on which the Temple stood. Thrupp, p. 86. *Moriah*, according to this author, means no special hill, but a certain hill-country. See p. 46.

rampart, issuing from the northern face of the wall of Zion, and after running northwards some hundreds of yards, sweeping round to the eastward and returning along the ridge above Jehoshaphat, connected the two hills together with a continuous line of defences. The hill of Zion was almost a perfect square: but Acra, more oblong in shape, overlapped it considerably to the northeast, and in the rectangle between them, a third hill, to which we may give the name of Calvary, rose a little lower than the one, and as much higher than the other. The venerable tradition which assigns this spot for the place of our Lord's crucifixion, and has consecrated it with the existing church of the Holy Sepulchre, may be accepted with reasonable confidence. At the date of the Crucifixion it stood outside the walls; but Herod Agrippa undertook to enclose it, together with a large suburb to the north, in a third line of defences. Bezetha, or the New City, for so it was denominated, embraced an area towards the north and north-east, fully equal to all the rest of Jerusalem together. The metropolis of Judaism was thus completed, after the type of Antioch or Alexandria, in three several quarters, separated from each other by distinct walls, but surrounded by an exterior fortification. On three sides it was defended by deep ravines, and its ramparts were piled up from the bottom, or elevated on the brow of nearly perpendicular precipices; but its northern face was level with the country beyond, and on this, the only accessible quarter, the attack of the Assyrians, in ancient times, and of the Romans under Pompeius, had been directed. The works of Agrippa were planned on a vast scale, to strengthen the city on its vulnerable side; but the Romans had jealously interfered. In some places the walls had scarcely risen from their foundations when he was forbidden to proceed with them. But they had been carried on hastily by the Sanhedrim in the first years of the insurrection, and the fortifications were completed, though not perhaps in their full proportions, when the enemy appeared before them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. Jud.* xix. 7. 2., *Bell. Jud.* v. 4. 2. Tacitus (*Hist.* v. 12.) says

The circuit of these exterior defences may have measured about four miles, and the ordinary population could scarcely amount to 200,000; but this number was vastly increased on occasion of the great festivals when the Jews thronged to their national temple from all quarters.<sup>1</sup> The inroads of the Romans into the rural districts of Galilee, Samaria, and Peræa had driven vast multitudes, as we have seen, to the capital for shelter, and as the spring of the year advanced, these were still further swelled by the influx of Paschal worshippers. Tacitus estimates at 600,000 the number inclosed within the walls at the period of the siege; and this estimate, great as it is compared with the extent of accommodation, is far less than what we might infer from certain statements of Josephus.<sup>2</sup> Within the

Extent and  
population of  
Jerusalem.

rampart of this triple city were several places of strength. The citadel was the castle Antonia, so called by Herod in honour of his patron the Triumvir. The towers Hippicus, Phasaelus and Mariamne, with probably some others, were separate fortresses constructed for mutual support. The Temple itself,

Its citadel and  
towers.

The Temple.

surrounded by an outer and inner wall, was capable of resisting very formidable attacks. It comprised an outer court of one stade or 600 feet each way, lined with double or triple porticoes, and within this an inner area, subdivided into four compartments, and containing the shrine without an idol, the mysterious Holy of Holies. In extent and the grandeur of its proportions as well as in decoration, this temple far

that after Agrippa's death the Sanhedrim had purchased the permission or connivance of Claudius for continuing the work. Thrupp, *Ancient Jerusalem*, p. 196.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus estimates the extent at thirty-three stades, which agrees very closely with the indications of the ground. See the Plan. In the time of Ptolemy Lagus, or at the founding of Alexandria, the population is computed by the same author (*contr. Apion.* i. 22.) at 120,000. The extent had doubled since that time; but some allowance should be made for his habitual exaggeration.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius states the number roundly at 2,000,000 (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 5.), from a passage in Josephus, which will be referred to hereafter.

exceeded any edifice of the kind in Rome: the outer court of the Capitol was only 200 feet square, and its inner cell no doubt proportionably diminutive. The palace of the kings of Judea I have already described as not less superior in magnificence to the abodes of Augustus and Tiberius.<sup>1</sup> The whole city, upon which many despots had lavished their wealth, as far surpassed Rome, at least before Nero's restorations, in grandeur, as it fell short of it in size and population.

With the closing days of the year 69 the empire had been won for the Flavian family, and its chiefs were now at leisure to direct all its forces against the two foreign foes who had so long profited by its divisions, and overwhelm the isolated revolts of Gaul and Judea. **Titus conducts an army against Jerusalem.** **A. D. 70. A. U. 828.** Vespasian, preparing to seat himself on the throne of the Cæsars, had instructed his son to open his fourth campaign with the investment of Jerusalem, every outer bulwark of which had been successively reduced by the operations of preceding years. Titus united four legions in this service, the Fifth, the Tenth, the Fifteenth, which were previously in the country, and the Twelfth from Syria, to which were added detachments of the Third and Twenty-second from Alexandria. Twenty cohorts of auxiliaries, with eight squadrons of cavalry, swelled his ranks, and he was joined by the contingents of Agrippa, Sohemus, and Antiochus king of Commagene, together with some bands of Arabs, between whom and the Jews there existed ancient feuds.<sup>2</sup> The numbers with which Vespasian had commenced the struggle have been com-

<sup>1</sup> The principal passages in Josephus for the description of the Temple are *Antiq. Jud.* xv. 11. 8. and *Bell. Jud.* v. 5. Comp. Tac. *Hist.* v. 12.: "Templum in modum arcis propriique muri, labore et opere ante alios: ipse porticus, quis templum ambiebatur, egregium propugnaculum. Fons perennis aquæ, cavati sub terra montes; et piscinæ cisternæque servandis imbribus: præviderant conditores, ex diversitate morum, crebra bella." The cisterns and subterranean galleries, a marked feature of the spot, are described by all the topographers.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 1.; Salvador, ii. 385.

puted at 60,000; it seems that the forces now led by Titus amounted to not less than 80,000. To these the Jews opposed, from behind their defences, 24,000 trained and well-armed soldiers; but these were supported by a multitude of irregular combatants, who rushed, at every emergency, from the lanes and closes of the city, to man the walls or sally from the gates.<sup>1</sup>

Titus, advancing from the north, planted his camp on the ridge called Scopus, from whence the city was first discovered to the view.<sup>2</sup> The Tenth legion was detached to take up its position on the Mount of Olives, to prevent escape and intercept succour on the side where alone they were to be apprehended.<sup>3</sup> But the Jews did not allow the enemy to form his lines unmolested. Some bloody combats took place before the defenders of Jerusalem consented to retire finally within their walls.<sup>4</sup> Aware of the strength and resolution of his opponents, aware also that he had three distinct lines of rampart to force, and two citadels to master, the Roman leader prepared to conduct the siege according to the rules of art, with the patience and perseverance not less requisite for success than bravery. It was necessary to advance men under cover of hurdles and extended skins to fill up the ditch with fascines, and to construct, almost in contact with the walls, huge banks of earth, supported by stones and stakes, till they reached the level of the ramparts. The face

Operations of  
Titus against  
the outer wall,  
which is at last  
forced.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus states that 10,000 Jews and 5000 Idumeans placed themselves under the orders of Simon; the remainder of the 24,000, of whom 8000 are specially mentioned as the Zealots of Eleazar, were attached to John of Giscala. *Bell. Jud.* v. 6. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Elevated as the position of Jerusalem is, it is nevertheless concealed from the traveller till within a short distance by an almost continuous amphitheatre of hills, which it does not everywhere overtop. From St. Elias, three miles to the south, from Olivet, or Scopus, it bursts upon him in all the majesty of its throne-like eminence. Hence the proud allusions in the Psalms and Prophecies to "the hill," "the mountain," "the throne," "the stronghold," of Jehovah.

<sup>3</sup> Dion (lxi. 4.) says that the defenders of Jerusalem received succours from their brethren beyond the Euphrates.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* v. 2. 4.; Tac. *Hist.* v. 11.



of these banks was as nearly as possible perpendicular; they sloped in the rear to afford easy ascent to the assailants. They were crowned, moreover, with towers, from which missiles of all kinds might be hurled by the strength of men's arms, or from engines adapted for the purpose.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the skill and spirit of the defenders were directed to overthrowing these constructions as fast as they were erected, and the mass of wood necessarily employed in them afforded aliment for fire. A successful sally enabled the Jews to get in the rear of these embankments, to attack the camp of the Romans, and destroy the munitions of war laid up for the service of the siege. The assailants were obliged to resume their operations with the mine and the battering-ram. The chambers they excavated beneath the walls were constantly countermined by the defenders; furious combats were waged in the darkness, and the miners were sometimes confounded by the attack of wild bears, and even of bees, let loose in the narrow galleries among them. The attempts to board the city from the banks, and to surprise it from underground, having equally failed, the battering engines were still plied with persevering resolution; stones and darts, boiling water and oil, were in vain poured down upon the covering which protected the assailants; at last the massive wall crumbled in dust before them, and the Romans stood triumphant within the outer line of defences.<sup>2</sup>

Since the entire overthrow of the moderate faction the affairs of the Jews had been conducted with far greater vigour. The chiefs of the Zealots, ably seconded by their creatures, whom they had installed in all places of trust and honour, carried everything before them. Though, while the Romans were

The population of Jerusalem overawed by the resolution of the Zealots.

<sup>1</sup> Valerius Flaccus, in the invocation of his poem, gives a picturesque description of Titus:

"Solymo nigrantem pulvere fratrem,  
Spargentemque faces, et in omni turre furentem."

He was wounded in the left shoulder, and his hand continued weak in consequence. Dion. lvi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* v. 7. 2.

still distant, they had continued to quarrel among themselves, and one of them had fallen by the hands of a rival, from the first appearance of the enemy before the walls all private contests had been suspended, and the operations of the defence, bold, skilful, and determined, had been carried on, at every gate and in every tower, with one heart and one mind. This unanimity in action was effected by the energy rather than the numerical strength of the dominant faction. Among the multitudes that crowded the streets of Jerusalem many no doubt were eager to escape from their fears and sufferings by instant submission; sentiments of honour, patriotism, and even religion succumbed before the pangs of destitution and the apprehension of approaching famine. The desperate resolution of their armed defenders had distressed rather than animated the unarmed populace. In the first instance Titus had attempted conciliation. He had sent Josephus to the foot of the gates to counsel submission, with the offer of honourable terms. But the chiefs of the army had not suffered him to be heard; they had driven him with bow-shots from the wall. When the Romans after six weeks' toil found themselves still before the second rampart with a second and again a third siege in prospect, they determined to change their policy, and work on the fears of the besieged. They threatened to reduce them by blockade. Titus drew a line of circumvallation round the city, at a distance of one or two furlongs from the walls, which was completed by three days' continuous labour of the whole army.<sup>1</sup> The distress of the people, cut off from all external supply, increased rapidly. Multitudes rushed frantically to the gates, and flung themselves into the inclosed space without, imploring permission of the Romans to depart into the country without arms or baggage. But Titus sternly refused. To deter them from the attempt, and teach them that they had no hope but in surrendering the city, he ordered the captives to

The Roman circumvallation.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* v. 12. 2.

be suspended on crosses round the walls, and continued for several days to inflict this cruel punishment upon all that fell into his hands.<sup>1</sup> The fugitives shrank back with piteous cries into the city, but their murmurs were unavailing; the chiefs and the soldiers maintained their dogged resolution, and in the midst of famine and pestilence, and the wailings of seers and prophets, still offered the daily prayers and performed the daily sacrifice in the Temple, invoking the Lord of Hosts to their aid, and looking for the promised Messiah.

The Romans continued to press the siege with repeated attacks upon the second wall and the citadel Antonia, and suffered many serious losses: they sent Josephus again and again in vain, to induce the defenders to capitulate; but they trusted more in the effect of the blockade, which became daily more distressing. The Zealots, regardless of the sufferings of the people, made rigid perquisitions for the sustenance of their soldiers, and great was the horror which pervaded all ranks when their officers, led by the scent of sodden flesh to the chamber of the widow Maria, discovered in her dish the mangled limbs of the child she had murdered for her meal. At an earlier period, while the Romans were still admitted within the city, a crazy enthusiast known as Joshua, the son of Hanan, had stalked, as one possessed, through the public places, exclaiming, *Woe to Jerusalem*. Rebuked and scourged in the presence of the procurator, he had refused to give any account of himself or explain the meaning of his ill-omened cry: checked for a season he now resumed it more vehemently than ever, and continued to traverse the streets, repeating, *A voice of ruin from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South; a voice of ruin against the City and against the Temple, against the bride and the bridegroom, and against all the people!* Some listened to him with pity, some with

<sup>1</sup> The Romans seemed to have excused these atrocities by affirming that the fugitives from Jerusalem poisoned their water and killed their stragglers. Dion, lvi. 5. At one time there was so much dejection in the camp of the besiegers that many of them deserted and took refuge in the besieged city.

fear; some thrust an alms into his hand; others scoffed and menaced him; but none ventured to punish him. Thus he went on wailing from day to day: at last he added to his list of woes, *Woe to me also!* At the same instant he was stricken with a stone from a Roman catapult, and fell dead on the ground.<sup>1</sup> The city was filled with reports of the fearful prodigies which were now remembered to have occurred before the outbreak of the present troubles; of comets and meteors, supposed to have announced the approaching downfall of the nation; men and chariots had battled in the air; the gates of the Temple had burst open of their own accord; and on the solemn day of Pentecost a voice *more than human* had been heard exclaiming, *Let us depart hence!*<sup>2</sup>

While, however, these portents struck terror into the hearts of the multitude, bolder spirits were not wanting among them, who consulted no omen but the voice of patriotism, and maintained that the nearer ruin impended, the nearer was the hour of deliverance. The day was at hand, they asserted, the day predicted in their priestly records, when the East should wax in power, and men go forth from Judea to rule the world. The Romans, listening credulously to every oracle, foreign or domestic, pointed with exultation to Titus and Vespasian, who issued from Judea to assume the government of the empire. Josephus, with a remnant of national feeling, or regard for the opinion of his countrymen, shrinks from interpreting the prophecy at all. The Christians, as is well known, have generally inclined to see in it an allusion to the Messianic visions of the elder prophets.<sup>3</sup> Indeed but a few

The Christians  
retire from Je-  
rusalem.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vi. 5. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Hist.* v. 13.: "Expasæ repente delubri foras, et audita major humana vox, Excedere Deos: simul ingens motus excedentium." Comp. Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* l. c.: *πρῶτον μὲν κινήσεως ἀντιλαβέσθαι ἔπασαν καὶ κτύπον, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ φωνῆς ἀθρόας, μεταβαίνουσαν ἐν τρεῖθιν.* It is remarkable that both the Pagan and the Jewish writer make use of the plural number.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Hist.* l. c.; Suet. *Vesp.* 4.; Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vi. 5. 4., who thinks fit to disparage the prophecy (probably Daniel, vii. 12, 15, 27, 28.): τὸ ἐνδραν

weeks before a little band of outcasts, rich in faith, but bare of this world's goods, had gone forth from Jerusalem and Judea, on the first approach of the Romans, and taken refuge beyond the Jordan in Pella, a village of the Decapolis.<sup>1</sup> These were the disciples of Jesus Christ, who had set up their church, after his departure, in the Jewish capital, and who clung, even against the convictions of their more scattered brethren, to many prejudices of their ancient faith. But when the impending fall of Jerusalem opened their eyes to the Scriptures which were written for their warning, they broke the last bands of patriotism and superstition which attached them to the Temple and the Altar, and proclaimed themselves missionaries of the new faith, without a backward glance of lingering reminiscence.<sup>2</sup> Then it might be said that the prophecy was spiritually fulfilled: the preachers of Christianity went forth from Judea for the moral conquest of the empire and the world. Much as we may admire the enthusiasm of the Jewish patriots, which does honour to our common humanity, still more freely may we sympathize with the inspiration of these soldiers of Christendom, who left father and mother, home and country, and all the associations on which they had fed from infancy, for the glory of God and the love of a spiritual Redeemer.

But disease and slaughter were thinning the Jewish ranks, and their numbers diminished even faster than their provisions. The Romans grew impatient of the delay. Again they pushed their engines to the walls, again they piled embankments against them, again they mined their foundations; while day

Titus captures the fortress Antonia, and invites the Jews to capitulate.

αὐτοὺς μάλιστα πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον ἦν χρησμός ἀμφίβολος, κ. τ. λ. For the Christian interpretation it may be sufficient to refer to Paley and Lardner.

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The Christians derived their warning from St. Matt. xxiv. 16. and St. Luke, xxi. 21.: τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη. According to the modern Jewish view: "Les Chrétiens de l'école spéciale de Josué ou Jésus de Nazareth, les Chrétiens-Nazaréens, se dégageaient alors du système d'expectative et de défense particulière à la loi Juive: ils se transformaient en instrument organisé de propagande religieuse et morale, de conquête, d'invasion." Salvador, il. 23.

by day the obstinate defenders overthrew their works and baffled their approaches. The perseverance with which Titus renewed his elaborate constructions after every failure was not less eminent than the fortitude of John and Simon. After every resource of skill had failed, Antonia was at last carried by surprise, and the Romans occupied the post which overlooked the Temple.<sup>1</sup> The siege had already lasted three months. Seven days were now employed in the destruction of the citadel, one wing only being reserved as a watch tower. All the buildings round it were thrown down to make room for the works required for the attack on the Temple, and the Lower City was at the same time demolished. Titus had now relaxed from his earlier severity. Large numbers of the population received their lives on submission, while the more desperate fled for refuge to the Temple and to Mount Zion. He continued to press offers of accommodation on the remnant of the defenders; but these were still met with unabated defiance. Once more was Josephus put forward to confer with the people on the wall, and entreat them to spare the holy place. He addressed them, like the Assyrian of old, in the Hebrew language, that all might understand him; but John, perceiving (so at least Josephus assures us) the impression he was making, sternly interrupted him, declaring that they had nought to fear, for Jerusalem was the Lord's, and the Lord would protect it.<sup>2</sup>

But Josephus, it might be imagined, was reputed a traitor, and was personally odious. The representations of the captives of the Lower City, now admitted to terms by their conquerors, might possibly be less obnoxious. Accordingly, a number of these people were ranged before the gates of the Temple and instructed to adjure their compatriots, with tears and prayers, to yield to a clement foe, and spare the cherished shrine of

*The Zealots refuse to hearken to terms.*

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vi. 1. 7. Antonia was taken on the seventeenth of Panemus, i. e. the beginning of July.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. vi. 2. 1.: ὡς οὐκ ἂν ποτε δέισαιεν ἄλωσιν, Θεοῦ γὰρ ὑπάρχειν τὴν πόλιν.

Jehovah from the ruin which must inevitably befall it. But the Zealots were obdurate. They erected their engines on the gate itself and poured from thence a shower of stones and darts, which strewed the terrace in front with bodies of their own countrymen, *as thick as a cemetery*.<sup>1</sup> The defenders of Jerusalem had now, in their despair, lost all respect for sacred things, as well as tenderness for their kindred. They flung open the recesses of the Temple, and carried on their operations regardless of religious usage, profaning the Holy of Holies with their unhallowed presence, and polluting with bloodstained hands the golden vines and the golden table.<sup>2</sup>

The demolition of Antonia and its outer bulwarks had cleared the space required for works against the northern wall of the Temple, its position rendering it on every other side inaccessible. Taking his stand on the remaining turret of the fortress, Titus, having in vain expostulated with his opponents, and declared that he would save their holy place even in their own despite, directed the operations of his engineers, and gave the signal for assault. But his materials, often consumed and as often replaced, were now less abundant, and had to be drawn from a greater distance: if the defences of the Temple were less formidable than those of the outer city, the works advanced against them were perhaps proportionally slender: if the assailants were encouraged by success, the defenders were maddened by despair, and baffled all their attacks with

Operations directed against the Temple.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vi. 2, 3. Such is the comparison of our author: ὡς τὸ εἰκλῷ μὲν ἱερὸν ἀπὸ πληθόνος νεκρῶν προσεοικέναι πολυανδρίῳ: such a cemetery, I suppose he means, as the places in which the bodies of slaves and strangers were exposed or imperfectly buried, as in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and the Esquiline field at Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. l. c.; τοῖς δ' ἀγίοις καὶ ἐβάτοις μετὰ τῶν ὀπλῶν εἰσπηδῶν, θερμὰς ἐτι τὰς χεῖρας ἐξ ὁμοφύλων ἔχοντες φόνων. The warmth of Josephus must be accepted with due qualification. The golden table and the enormous vines of the same metal are mentioned by Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* v. 5. 4.), among the most splendid objects within the Temple, after it had lost the Ark, the Mercy Seat, the Urim and Thummim and the Shechinah.

unfailing resolution. Sometimes the Jews sallied from their strongholds and even crossed the vale of Kedron on their right, and dashed themselves in vain against the Roman circumvallation; again the Romans, in the darkness of the night, scaled the low rampart of the Temple, and effected a lodgment for a moment, only to be driven from it headlong, when the dawn revealed them to their enemies. On one occasion the defenders purposely evacuated the western gallery of their outer court, and allowed the Romans to climb into it. The stone pillars were surmounted with wooden beams and rafters, and in the space between these and the roof they had piled a mass of combustibles, to which they now set fire, and consumed, along with the portico itself, a great number of their assailants.<sup>1</sup> But as the defence of the outer wall relaxed, the missiles of the besiegers became more effective. They continued to cast their brands into the inclosure; care was no longer taken to extinguish them as they fell, and at length the range of the northern portico, roofed also with wood, was wrapped in flames. It was now impossible to maintain the outer ramparts. John and Simon, with the best equipped of their followers, withdrew altogether from the Temple, and sought refuge in the Upper City, while retreat was still open. They crossed the connecting causeway, and then broke it down behind them. But the priests, the women, and the unarmed multitude paid no heed to this desertion. The flames which raged on two sides of the holy place seemed to their wild fanaticism a barrier set by God between Himself and the enemy. They crowded with frantic devotion within the second enclosure, and awaited their deliverance in grim security. Meanwhile Titus advanced his engines to the outer wall; but the strength of its compact masonry still defied the battering-rams. He undermined the gates; his engines shook their sustaining bulwarks; but though the surface crumbled, the mass stood firm, and barred ingress. He applied ladders,

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vi. 3. 1.



horrors recorded or imagined. The chiefs, deluding their followers to the last, had contrived, as we have seen, to escape the holocaust in the Temple. Behind the walls of the Upper City they stood again, however hopelessly, at bay. But their ramparts were strong, and to the north, where alone the nature of the ground rendered siege operations possible, a deep and broad ditch was excavated in the rock before them. Titus received the acclamations of his soldiers, who saluted him as emperor. He planted his standards at the eastern portal of the Temple, which was still standing, and performed his sacrifices before them; this done, he resumed his tedious work with admirable patience. Once more he charged Josephus to summon the malignants. The renegade was dismissed a last time without a hearing. He came forward in person to the chasm in the bridge, and the Jewish chiefs conferred with him from the other side. The Roman addressed them as an injured yet placable master. He offered life to such as should lay down their arms and acknowledge his authority. To such as persisted in their crime he threatened merciless punishment. The Zealots replied that they had sworn an oath never to surrender: let them pass freely through the gates with their wives and children, and they would abandon their city and betake themselves to the wilderness. Well indeed might they distrust their conqueror. A few unarmed priests, who had cowered among the ruins of the Temple, had just before descended, pressed by hunger, and thrown themselves on his mercy; they had been led straightway to execution, with the brutal sarcasm that those who live by the altar should perish with the altar.<sup>1</sup> On this refusal of the insurgents the emperor declared that the whole city should be razed to the ground, and began at once, in the quarters he held, the work of demolition.

But while preparations were making in the Roman quarters for the reduction of the last stronghold of the Jews, the

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vi. 6. 1.

defenders themselves had broken through all restraints of discipline, and the Upper City was abandoned to rapine and slaughter. Jealousy and discord reigned among the Jews; their chiefs surrendered to them every obnoxious citizen; and thousands were impelled to throw themselves into the hands of the enemy, who granted them for the most part life and liberty. An armed band seized the palace, repulsed an attack of the Romans, put to the sword the multitudes who had taken refuge in it, to the number, as we are told, of four thousand, and divided among themselves the treasures which had been lodged there. One Roman prisoner they slew, and dragged his body through the streets in impotent revenge for their own slaughtered myriads; another they bound for execution in the face of his countrymen, but he contrived to escape from their hands, and reached the Roman lines. It was reported, as an instance of the sternness of the general's discipline, tempered by his personal clemency, that though he refrained from smiting with the axe the soldier who had suffered himself to be captured, he deprived him of his arms, and discharged him with ignominy from the service.<sup>1</sup>

*Dissolution of order and discipline among the Jews.*

But famine at last was doing the work of the besiegers, more surely than the sword or the catapult. The blockade was strictly kept; provisions failed; the armed slew the unarmed to diminish the number of mouths, but their own strength no longer sufficed for a last attempt to break the lines of circumvallation. A gleam of hope still flickered in their bosoms. The limestone hills of Judea are perforated with numerous caves and fissures, and the site of Jerusalem itself is mined with vaults and galleries, excavated by the hand of man. Here were the storehouses and granaries, the reservoirs and the sewers of the great city; narrow and winding passages led from hill to hill, from building to building beneath the walls, and into the valleys beyond them. It seemed possible

*Famine, massacres, and retreat into the vaults beneath the city.*

<sup>1</sup> Josep. vi. 7. 1.

to find here a means of exit; the labyrinth might at least afford an impenetrable hiding-place. John and Simon withdrew from the defences of the ramparts, and repaired with the most desperate of their followers to these subterranean retreats, while the Romans occupied the strongholds they had abandoned, and carried fire and slaughter through the streets of the Upper City. Overtaking the crowd of fugitives, fleeing, yet with no asylum to flee to, in these narrow avenues, they slew till they were weary of slaughter; then broke into the houses and loaded themselves with plunder till they could carry off no more. In some dwellings they discovered the bodies of whole families huddled together: hunger had anticipated the sword. From such places the fiercest warriors recoiled with horror, and rushed back into the streets empty-handed.<sup>1</sup>

The Upper City perished in the flames, like the quarters which had been captured before. On the 8th of Gorpæus, apparently an early day in September, five months and a half after the first investment, Jerusalem ceased to exist.<sup>2</sup> Titus himself advanced step by step through the blazing ruins, admiring the vast strength of the defences, the solidity of the towers, the size of the stones, and the nice adjustment of the masonry.<sup>3</sup> *God has been my helper*, he devoutly exclaimed,—unless, indeed, the words were ascribed to him by the uneasy conscience of the renegade,—*God it was that pulled down the Jews from those formidable walls; for what could the hands*

*Destruction of  
the Upper City  
by the Romans.*

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vi. 8. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Dion (lxi. 7.) asserts that Jerusalem was taken on the Sabbath day. He had said the same of its capture by Pompeius, and again by Sosius. Josephus, who would not have passed over such a coincidence, makes no mention of it. Norisius, who fixes the date to Sept. 2., proves that this was not the Sabbath.

<sup>3</sup> At the bottom of the hills in some places, particularly below the area of the temple, there may now be seen some courses of stones of immense proportions, bevelled (that is, the junction between them grooved to some depth), giving a great appearance of solidity. It seems possible that these may be remains of the walls which Titus admired, and which Josephus signalized for their ἀκρίβεια τῆς ἀμυνίας, vi. 9. 1.

of men or their engines have availed against them! While he gave orders for the complete destruction of the stronghold which had made so memorable a resistance to the forces of the empire, he directed that three of its towers should be allowed to stand as a monument of its strength, and of his perseverance.<sup>1</sup> With the same deliberation, and on similar principles, he proceeded to deal with the multitudes, who, after the fury of the victors was satiated, still remained to glut their pride or their cupidity. He decreed that those only who were found in arms and resisting should henceforth be slain; all who sued for quarter should be spared, collected together, and numbered. Yet when the tale was completed, the old and useless were passed in cold blood on the edge of the sword. The tallest and best looking were next chosen to grace the conqueror's triumph; of the rest all above the age of seventeen were drafted off to the quarries in Egypt, or condemned to fight with beasts in the theatres of Antioch and Cæsarea. All the children were sold as slaves. But the fierce animosity of the soldiers outran the barbarity of their officers, and was met with equal exasperation on the part of the victims. Of the whole number, eleven thousand if we may believe the most terrible story in Josephus, perished from starvation, some denied aliment by their keepers, others refusing to accept it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The bases of the towers Hippicus and Phasael are believed by many topographers still to exist at the foot of certain turrets of the modern citadel of Jerusalem. Williams, art. *Jerusalem*, in *Dict. Class. Geography*.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. vi. 9. 2.: ἐφθόρησαν δ' αὐτῶν ἐν αἷς διέκρινεν ἡμέραις ἑπ' ἐνδείας χίλιοι πρὸς τοῖς μυρίαις, οἱ μὲν ὑπὸ μίσους τῶν φυλάκων μὴ μεταλαμβάνοντες τροφῆς, οἱ δ' οὐ προσέμενοι διδομένην. According to this author 90,000 Jews were made captives in the course of the whole war, a number which seems by no means excessive. But I cannot persuade myself to place in my text his enumeration of the victims of the siege, which he makes to amount to 1,100,000. This estimate, he adds, will not appear extravagant when we remember that the multitudes which flocked to Jerusalem for the passover were shut up in the city, and that the priests, when interrogated by Cestius about the number of their people, had calculated the number of Paschal lambs in a given year at 250,500, and the number of communicants, at little more than ten to each, at

Fierce and cruel as the leaders of the Jewish patriots had proved themselves, we could nevertheless have wished to learn that they too fell at last, sword in hand, on the last tower or behind the last breastwork of their city. But both Simon and John, as we have seen, had sought escape, or at least concealment, in its underground galleries; nor were they successful. John, pressed by hunger, came presently forth and surrendered himself openly to the conqueror. Simon had taken with him tools and workmen, as well as food, and laboured to excavate a passage till his supplies failed him. He then thought, in his last extremity, to impose upon the Romans by contriving to rise arrayed magnificently in white or purple from the centre of the Temple platform. The awe or terror of the spectators soon abated when they saw, beneath the royal or priestly robes, the squalid features of their victim. Detected by a Roman officer, he was led bound to Titus. Both to the Romans and to his countryman Josephus he seems to have been more particularly obnoxious than his colleague. While John was granted his life, and kept without public disgrace in perpetual confinement, Simon was reserved for the special ornament of the triumph, for ignominy, and for death.<sup>1</sup>

This, says the historian, was the sixth time that the Jewish capital had been captured, the second time that it had been destroyed. When it rose again from its ashes, it was by the hands, not of its own people, but of Roman colonists; and many are the generations which have since witnessed a siege and a sack of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Of the remainder of this war, which this signal blow did not immediately terminate, there needs little be said. The Jews

Conclusion of  
the war.

2,700,000. vi. 9. 3. Comp. Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 5. The physical impossibility of such numbers being accommodated within the area of the city has been often demonstrated.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Jerusalem is said to have been *taken* seventeen times in all,—sometimes, as under the Persian Chosru and the Crusaders, with terrible slaughter; but it has been *overthrown* only by Nebuchadnezzar and Titus.

still maintained themselves in some fortresses of Judea, and the defence of Machærus and Massada adds another brilliant gleam to the sunset of their glory. But the final result of these operations was no longer doubtful, and the Roman chief did not feel that his presence was required at them. His cares were directed to organizing the government of his conquests. The residence of Titus at Berytus, and again at Cæsarea, was marked by bloody shows in the circus, where he solemnized the birthdays of his father and brother with the slaughter of multitudes of Jewish captives. From thence he returned to witness the completion of his instructions with regard to Jerusalem, and, leaving the Tenth legion in garrison on the spot, carried with him the Fifth and Fifteenth into Egypt. His acceptance of the title of Imperator from his soldiers was calculated to give umbrage to the jealousy of the reigning emperor, and his indiscretion in wearing the diadem in a religious ceremony at Memphis was interpreted perhaps by the courtiers to his disadvantage: it was remembered, moreover, that his younger brother, with far less personal merits, had betrayed too keen a zest for imperial distinctions. Titus was well aware that his conduct was liable to misconstruction. Hastening accordingly to Rome as soon as affairs permitted him, he presented himself unannounced in the palace, exclaiming, *Here am I, father!* Vespasian, with good sense and feeling, requited him with confidence and honours, associating him in the triumph which followed, and in the cares and gratifications of empire.<sup>1</sup> That triumph, earned with more toil and peril than any one perhaps of the three hundred and twenty which had preceded it, has been rendered memorable to posterity by monuments still existing.<sup>2</sup> Even

Titus returns  
to Rome and  
triumphs with  
Vespasian.

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tit.* 5, 6. This association in the empire is selected for the subject of a special compliment by Silius (*Punica* iii. 603.). Dion remarks (*lxi.* 7.) that neither Vespasian nor Titus took the cognomen of Judaicus. "Ob contemptum gentis," says Reimar.

<sup>2</sup> The Christian historian Orosius, in his satisfaction at the overthrow of the Jews, looks with special favour on this Judæan triumph: "Pulchrum et igno-

in the confusion of the storm and the conflagration, some of the choicest ornaments of the Temple may have been seized and saved by the conquerors. Many of them had perhaps been hidden by pious hands before the last crisis of disaster. But after the capture of the city, certain priests emerging from their hiding-places had saved their own lives by delivering the treasures they had secreted. The sacred furniture of the Holy Place was borne before the Emperors to the Capitol—the candlestick with seven branches, the golden table, the trumpets which announced the year of Jubilee, the book of the Law and the Vessel of incense.<sup>1</sup> When, some years later, an arch was erected to commemorate the victory of Titus, these illustrious trophies were sculptured upon it, with figures of Jewish captives surmounted by an emblem of the victor's apotheosis.<sup>2</sup> These witnesses to the truth of the history I have related are scanned at this day by Christians passing to and fro between the Colosseum and the forum: and at this day the Jew refuses to walk beneath them, and creeps stealthily by the side, with downcast eyes or countenance averted.<sup>3</sup>

tum antea cunctis mortalibus inter trecentos viginti triumphos, qui a conditio-  
 Urbis usque ad id tempus acti erant, hoc spectaculum fuit, patrem et filium uno  
 triumphali curru vectos, gloriosissimam ab his, qui patrem et filium offenderant,  
 victoriam reportasse.” Domitian, says Suetonius (*Domit.* 2.), accompanied the  
 triumphal car, on a white horse; but “black care” sat doubtless behind him.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 5. 5., compared with the sculptures on the Arch of Titus at Rome.

<sup>2</sup> The Jewish trophies are sculptured in bas-relief on the inside of the arch, beneath the vaulting. Opposite to these is another bas-relief, representing Titus in the quadriga, the reins held by the goddess Roma. In the centre of the arch Titus is borne to heaven by an eagle. It may be conjectured that these ornaments to his glory were designed after the death of Vespasian, and completed after his own. Another monument of the Jewish triumph exists in the medals of Vespasian, bearing the figure of “Judea captive” beneath the palm-tree. Eckhel, vi. 326. For the subsequent history of the Jewish trophies, which can be traced down to the time of Belisarius, see Burton's *Antiquities of Rome*, i. 290., from Tillemont, *Empereurs Romains*.

<sup>3</sup> For this popular statement Burton refers to Madame de Staël's *Corinne*, chap. iv. That imaginative writer does not profess to give her authority, but

The annexation of Palestine to the empire was now finally confirmed, and the provinces given in charge to an imperial procurator. Vespasian founded no colony to secure his conquest: he settled 800 of his veterans in the town of Emmaus seven miles from Jerusalem, but he assigned them no territorial possessions. The whole soil was confiscated and sold for the benefit of the fiscus to the highest bidder. A remnant of the native population entered again, perhaps, into possession of their estates, but at the price of a tribute equal in amount to the fee simple, with the forfeiture of their polity, and dissolution of their chief bond of union. The contribution of two drachmas, which every child of Israel throughout the world had hitherto given annually to the Temple, he was now required to transfer to the Capitol.<sup>1</sup> With the reduction of Palestine the consolidation of the empire was completed. From the Mersey to the Dead Sea no nation remained erect, and the resistance of the last free men on her frontiers had been expiated with their blood. The overthrow of Judea, with all the monuments of an ancient but still living civilization, was the greatest crime of the conquering republic. It commenced in wanton aggression, and was effected with a barbarity of which no other example occurs in the records of civilization. Jerusalem shared the fate of Tarquinii and Corinth; but the Romans, stalking among the ruins of Zion, seemed unconscious that they had annihilated a nation more important in the history of the world than Etruria, or even than Greece. Yet not altogether annihilated. The homeless Jews, scattered, as captives or fugitives, more widely than ever, bore throughout the empire and beyond it the seeds of the law delivered from Sinai, the fortitude which neither

Final annexation of Palestine and consolidation of the empire.

only remarks: "Il est à souhaiter, pour l'honneur des Juifs, que cette anecdote soit vraie: les longs souvenirs conviennent aux longs malheurs."

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. *Bell. Jud.* vii. 6. 6. Dion, lxi. 7., where see Reimar's note, and references to Suet. *Domit.* 12.; Tertullian, *Apol.* 18.; Appian, *Syriac.* p. 119.; and Origen, *Opp.* i. 28. ed. Ruæ.; showing how long and how constantly this exaction was maintained.



Egyptian, nor Syrian, nor Roman could bend or break, the hopes which delay had not extinguished, the maxims which patriarchs and prophets had revered. Even on the frontiers of Palestine the ancient voices were again uplifted. To the temple of Jerusalem succeeded the schools of Tiberias; and the influence of the Rabbis has in all ages been felt, if not always acknowledged, by Christians and Mahometans, by the sages of both the West and East.

Nor is this all. The Temple fell in the early days of August; the exact date we have not perhaps the means of ascertaining. Josephus indeed, embracing the fond imagination of his countrymen, was persuaded that its final destruction occurred precisely on the day, the 10th of the month Ab, on which it had been once before destroyed by the Assyrians, being 1180 years, 7 months and 15 days from its first foundation by Solomon, 539 years and 45 days from its restoration under Cyrus.<sup>1</sup> But if we may indulge in the observation of such coincidences, none is more remarkable than the fall by fire, within eight months of each other, of the two national temples of the Romans and the Jews. We have remarked throughout this history the close political connexion, and at the same time the social distrust and jealousy, existing between these peoples. We have long anticipated the decisive war which was destined at last to spring from them. But we have discovered, at the root of

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. vi. 4. 8. Our author is generally supposed to use the names of the Macedonian months for the Jewish, which most nearly corresponded with them. Thus Lous represents Ab, which comprises (normally) part of July and August. But as the Hebrew months are lunar, with a thirteenth intercalated periodically, the solar season to which they correspond may vary to the extent of eleven days. The 10th of Lous, therefore, on which the Temple was burnt, may be at the end of July or early in August. Modern chronologists have cut the knot by making Lous to correspond exactly with the Roman August, and so fixing the date in question to August 10. See *Art de Vérifier les Dates*: après J. C. iv. 188. Clinton, more discreetly, abstains from determining it. *Fast. Hell.* iii. 353., *Fast. Rom.* i. 58. The Jews keep their annual fast, in memory of the fall of the Temple, on the 9th of Ab. Salvador, *Domin. Rom en Judée*, ii. 468.

this mutual repulsion, so unnaturally controlled, a conflict of ideas still more grave and lasting. Palestine was the cradle of the Gospel; the Jews the people first appointed to expound it. The destruction, never to be repaired, of their material Temple cut the cords which bound the New Faith to its local habitation, and launched it, under the hand of Providence, on its career of spiritual conquest; while the boasted restoration of the Capitol was a vain attempt to retain hold of the past, to revive the lost or perishing, to reattach to new conditions of thought an outworn creed of antiquity.

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